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COMMONWEAL

A CRY IN THE WILDERNESS: Jon Sobrino ▪ LETTER FROM BERLIN: Czarina Wilpert ▪ SHOULD I HAVE LET HIM IN? Thomas J. Craughwell ▪ INFANT & MARTYRS: Rosemary Dee[illegible] S. Cunningham ▪ ANOTHER WAY TO PEACE: Catherine Guicherd

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CORRESPONDENCE

I'm with Mario

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: I think David Carlin's point in "A Tragedy Without Villains" [October 6]—that respect for even the potential personhood of the unborn is necessary to safeguard the basis of the freedom prochoicers honor—is very well taken. Though I prefer stands, like his, based on thought, to those that flow from feeling, I find myself feeling—not, however, so vigorously as many others—prolife, too. Perhaps it is because I have felt growing life within me and I have seen in those I've known—both men and women—how painful a decision to have an abortion was, even though those decisions were based upon reasons anything but frivolous; almost all of the people doing the deciding would classify themselves as prochoice.

One has to *learn* to see abortion as a rite of passage or as the ultimate means of birth control, as some of its more zealous defenders seem able to do. It is not, I think, an attitude that comes naturally.

Having said that, I admit I'm not terribly happy about the latest chapter in the *Roe* v. *Wade* saga. I, too, have found myself ostracized because I don't support abortion on demand—ostracized by those whom my collection of noble-losers buttons (dating back to Adlai Stevenson) ought to make my allies. It is good, as one of your correspondents noted, to know there are people on my side, too. But, as Mary Ann Glendon has said, *Roe* v. *Wade* is a bad law because it is one-sided in considering only "rights"—not all the other values involved in matters of life and death; bad law apparently leads to bad redress.

The basis for the Court's support in the *Missouri* case was that the state is not obligated by the Constitution to provide such services free, especially "a service" so many of its citizens see as wrong.... Where is the genuine support for life in this decision that would give poor women the means to bear their children in hope instead of fear? It's true that prolifers are much more aware of the spectrum of need that follows birth than they once were, but most of their efforts are merely part of the "thousand points of light," not part of the law. I find myself, therefore, still with Mario Cuomo. It seems to me that an unassailable definition of a bad law is that it is one only the poor have to obey.

MARIAN BURKHART

About Malcom X

Tallahassee, Fla.

To the Editors: Bridget Balthrop Morton's reflections on adolescence, nonviolence, and racial perception ["Daniel: Beloved by God and by Me" October 20], point out the views of humans and the world that many of us go through in searching for an ethic by which to live. Some never rise above being polemicists (Spike Lee), but a few become prophets (Martin Luther King, Jr.). In the struggle for racial identity in a nation tainted with racism, both points of view are necessary to cajole the complacent and salve the despair of those living in the promised land.

However, Daniel Morton needs to know that Malcolm X's words on the screen at the end of *Do the Right Thing* were not his final thoughts on violence. They were prompted by threats made on his family's life. The call for self-defense was made in the atmosphere that allowed the Birmingham church bombing in 1963, and can hardly be considered radical coming from a man whose father was murdered by a white lynch mob in Michigan. Indeed, his house was firebombed in 1964 while he and his family slept. He had no illusions that his own life would be safe from a violent death, but he did not want his family sacrificed also.

A little discussed fact about Malcolm X is that he underwent a profound spiritual conversion in the last year of his life. During a trip to Mecca and Africa, he saw that people *could* live together no matter what color their skins. His experience of Islam as a way of life (as opposed to the racially restricted philosophy of the Black Muslims) showed him that despite their differences, humans could live in peace. In some ways, his death at the hands of Black Muslim henchmen was caused by his espousal of nonviolence as well as his disaffection for Elijah Muhammed's Nation of Islam.

The world that Daniel and Ethan will inherit faces the same problems that Bridget's world did twenty years ago. The solutions may not be any clearer now, but the cries for peace and goodwill do not always fall on deaf ears.

FRANCIS C. SKILLING, JR., M.D.

MacSwiney's death

Staten Island, N.Y.

To the Editors: In "The Battle of Long Kesh" [October 6], Joe Wakelee-Lynch writes of the hunger strikers, and their ordeal. The ten men died there not only for the principle of being declared political prisoners, but for the larger principle of the freedom of their country from Britain.

Their activities had nothing to do with the Gandhian principle of *Satyagraha* or of passive resistance. They were part of the resistance to the British rule in Northern Ireland which subjected Irish Nationalists,

(Continued on page 713)

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COMMONWEAL 65

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The indomitable Word

In the beginning was the Word.

In the first verses of Genesis, when the earth lay in silence and "darkness covered the abyss," it was speech that drew forth substance and established form. From speech sprang forth not only illumination ("Let there be light"), but life itself. Thus the psalmist described God as the One "who spoke and the world was created." God's word—or better, linguistic act—effected what it announced.

And it was good.

Language as activator and guarantor. Think of the single word "Solidarity." In this decade it has empowered a whole people whose subsequent acts have produced a moral and political revolution. From out of the dark and formless void of a people's inarticulate yearnings, "solidarity" has fashioned a renewed sense of human possibility.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word became flesh.

There is scarcely a more compelling commentary on those lines from John's Gospel than Oliver Sacks's recent study of the deaf and their language: *Seeing Voices* (University of California Press). Sacks, a neurologist, writes that language arises biologically in human beings from the irrepressible need of the human individual to think and communicate. It is through language that the human brain actually develops the ability to think: that capacity to acquire, store, process, relate, and ultimately share the perception of reality. It is through language that we first realize and then develop our intellectual and emotional capacities; reflect on them and use them to create (yes!) our thoughts; communicate them to one another, and thus become fully developed persons. To be languageless, then, for human beings, is the most desperate of calamities. As Sacks notes, to lack language is to be prevented from fully entering the human estate.

Those born without the ability to hear, though not lacking inherent intellectual capabilities, sometimes appear—and may eventually become—mentally defective, unless they develop an adequate means of self-expression. Language liberates. It opens us to one another and to the cultural intercourse which is our birthright, to that which is essential for fully developed human personality.

The word overcomes the darkness.

Sacks's study opens another vista—an alien world for most of us "native speakers in the world of speech"—the world of Sign, the speech of the deaf. Sign is a living language: still developing, and yet lexically, grammatically, and syntactically complete. It was first discerned as such and then deciphered by the Abbé Charles de l 'Epeé, a French priest driven by the desire to share the word of God with the deaf-mute. In 1755 he founded a school for the deaf, and by listening to them—that is, by paying attention to his pupils' unique plastic and visual form of communication—he was led to associate signs with pictures and then written words. Thus he was able to teach

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them to read, and in so doing, opened to them the whole world of literature and culture.

Sign, rather than merely sequential, is iconic, multidimensional, and nearly cinematic in form. Like other indigenous languages, it has known suppression under various colonizers. For many years American Sign Language was held in disrepute even at Gallaudet University, the nation's only university for the deaf. There, a form of gestured English (signed English) was promoted, and even though the school was founded in their behalf, the deaf were systematically prevented from attaining positions of higher authority in the institution.

This disparaging of Sign and exclusion of the deaf from full participation set the stage for a dramatic upheaval at Gallaudet. In a week's time in early March 1988, the university's students galvanized the Washington, D.C. campus and caught the imagination of the world. Theirs was a signed rebellion: silent, yet ringing. They struck classes, reached out to the hearing community, and brought their demands to a climax by demonstrating on the steps of the Capitol. There, in a sea of hands, they issued their own emancipation proclamation, the only sound being—for the most part—sudden waves of applause. Democracy has seldom been so graphically rendered.

The university capitulated. To the students, their own "calm strength of union" had come as a revelation. Their cohesion and victory seemed to emerge all at once, like the crystallization of a supersaturated solution. But it was really the fruit of a long-latent sense of communal mind—in a word, solidarity—made manifest in the fullness of time by their nonviolent demonstrations. To others, it was an epiphany.

Solidarity. The same phenomenon that swept Gallaudet is at play elsewhere over the wide earth. Poland's Solidarity movement, nonviolent and self-disciplined, once outlawed and suppressed, has sown a remarkable harvest in all of Eastern Europe. Elsewhere, in El Salvador for example, the adherents of human solidarity continue to suffer and to be killed. But they will not be silenced. For such is the nature of the Word itself. It reaches out; sounds where it will; and is near at hand.

In the beginning was the Word. No mere spoken formula; no mere sound byte; no mere abstract ideological or moral message.

The Word became flesh and dwells among us. A person, active in history, loving beyond measure, participant in our lives; bearer and enactor of the Good News. The One who opens ears and minds, who hears the cry of the poor, who makes us one and fully human.

In the beginning is the Word. We need but listen and respond.

PRETORIA'S MIXED SIGNALS

Visiting *Commonweal's* offices last spring, Naomi Tutu, twenty-nine-year-old daughter of Cape Town's Archbishop Desmond Tutu, spoke of a growing impatience among younger members of the anti-apartheid movement and of a widening gap between religious leaders still willing to negotiate with Pretoria's white minority government and the young, who see negotiations as capitulation. A report by the human rights group Africa Watch confirms that young militants—some of whom as children experienced harassment, detention, displacement, violence, and even torture at the hands of government—are more inclined than their elders to reject talks and turn to violence.

That is why the demonstrations led by prominent black church leaders last summer, aimed at integrating Cape Town's two remaining segregated beaches, were significant. The chances of peaceful change were further bolstered by the inauguration, September 20, of President F. W. de Klerk, already more conciliatory than his predecessor, P. W. Botha. De Klerk made an important gesture in October when his government released Walter Sisulu, former general secretary of the banned African National Congress (ANC) and a handful of other long-term political prisoners.

Having served twenty-six years of a life sentence for treason, Sisulu brings unquestioned credentials and tested, patient strength to the anti-apartheid movement, still in the hands of a seasoned generation. Two weeks after his discharge, Sisulu galvanized all three principal factions in the opposition: antiwhite nationalists; democratic moderates seeking constitutional change by nonviolent means; and, somewhere in between, the followers of Chief Buthelezi, the Inkatha, saddled with his idiosyncratic views. While baffled government troops stood by, Sisulu addressed some 70,000 protestors, including hundreds of whites, gathered for one of South Africa's largest political rallies in thirty years. The rally was technically illegal—but was covered by government television.

Sisulu announced that he intends to discuss "the normalization of the situation in South Africa" with de Klerk. At the same time, he questioned the government's seriousness about dismantling apartheid. Though the rally itself passed without a single violent incident, Sisulu explicitly declared that the ANC will not unilaterally renounce the use of revolutionary violence, a step the government has long demanded as a precondition for negotiations.

Later, Sisulu said of de Klerk, "he must make reasonable efforts to create a climate for negotiations."

The language is mild, the request is hardly radical. Yet everyone knows that the anti-apartheid leaders cannot settle for half-measures or long delays without losing their followers. Both they and some of their counterparts in government appear to sense the ripeness of the moment: steps toward constitutional change must begin now, while veteran black leaders can mediate the transition to majority rule. There are indications that elements of the Nationalist party realize, first, that basic change is coming, and second, that it is far more likely to come about peacefully under the leadership of near-mythic figures like Sisulu and Nelson Mandela, whose stature in black Africa and the world remains unchallengeable, than would be the case if they were succeeded by younger, angrier, less experienced leaders.

Still, the signals are mixed. On the one hand, the government is consulting Sisulu and Mandela about how to proceed toward an end of apartheid and the continuing official state of emergency. In November, four new areas were opened for integrated housing—clearly a step forward. But other events and nonevents

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send a different message. The Group Areas Act, embodying a basic principle of apartheid, remains in force. Mandela is still in prison. In September, a women's march against apartheid was banned, and those who defied the ban were beaten. In October, the *New Nation*, a weekly paper edited by Sisulu's thirty-seven-year-old son, Swelakhe (a former Neiman Fellow at Harvard, now under a banning order), was placed under investigation for violating emergency regulations. In late November, hours before a rally in the Transkei "homeland" where the ANC and the United Democratic Front were to be "unbanned," government police moved in with teargas; two people were killed. Earlier, the government had enacted the Disclosure of Foreign Funding Act, requiring nonprofit organizations to report to the government all foreign contributions they receive. Prosecution of anti-apartheid groups could subject these funds to seizure, a move that might well destroy the movement, or drive it wholly underground.

Given these conflicting developments, it is impossible to know whether de Klerk accepts the necessity of peaceful change to avoid violent change—and, if he does, whether he commands enough support among the ruling whites to bring it off. Though he and his followers speak of "a new South Africa," what they have done so far amounts to tinkering with the system rather than replacing it, and is in any case easily reversible. Gestures such as the release of Sisulu may well be intended not to presage deeper changes but only to ease the pressure of economic sanctions imposed by other nations and to rescue the Republic from its pariah status in the world.

Despite their bravado and defiance, white South Africans cannot find it comfortable to live in the world under condemnation as untouchables. World opinion can function as an honest mirror, sending back a true and ugly reflection. And the sanctions hurt. "Economic pressures," said Naomi Tutu, "have led a fair number of white South Africans to start questioning what apartheid holds for them. They've responded in one of two ways: a move to the far right...or...concrete opposition to apartheid." There has been a growth of white involvement in opposition to the system, including a rising number of young men refusing to serve in the military—"people taking a very personal stand vis-à-vis their lives." Meantime, there is also new recognition and partial acknowledgment of apartheid's long-term costs: a majority of South Africa's citizenry impoverished, unemployed, undereducated, malnourished, and outraged enough to persist in their efforts to gain power over their lives and their country. One can begin to speak of a change of heart among some white South Africans—a critical change but one impossible to quantify. Despite the strength of the uncompromising pro-apartheid right, the National party and the liberal Democratic party together received 70 percent of the white vote in September's elections.

What is at issue in South Africa is more far-reaching than access to political participation. Any government in which blacks and whites share power will face the very great problem of reshaping not only the nation's political, judicial, and educational systems but also its economy; justice demands, and the realities of power will require, a redistribution of wealth and an equalizing of opportunity.

A vast and tricky assignment; reluctance can be understood. But it must not be accepted. Despite the recent liberalizing gestures, this is no time for "outsiders" like ourselves to speak of relaxing sanctions. That can be considered only when de Klerk and his government begin to speak (like Mikhail Gorbachev) of the universality of human rights and individual freedom, and back up such talk with concrete action. He could begin by rescinding the broad executive powers Botha conferred upon his government by enacting the state of emergency. That would be followed by a step-by-step eradication of apartheid's restrictions and taboos, a cut-off of South Africa's aid to Angolan rebels, fulfillment of Namibian independence, and creation of a draft constitution including a bill of rights, to be adopted, rejected, or amended by a democratically elected constituent assembly.

For most white South Africans, all this makes up a very large pill, hard to swallow—but nothing nearly so bitter as the medicine that most black South Africans have been forced to ingest every day of their lives. F. W. de Klerk, Nelson Mandela, and Walter Sisulu may never be best friends, but at this moment in history they can be indispensable allies.

A VOICE FROM THE WILDERNESS

DEATH IN EL SALVADOR

WHY THE WAR GOES ON

Jon Sobrino, S.J., worked and lived with the six Jesuits who were killed in San Salvador in the early hours of November 16. At the time of the murders, he was lecturing in Thailand. Now in the United States waiting to return to El Salvador, where he has worked for sixteen years at the University of Central America, he spoke with Commonweal *by telephone from the West Coast.*

THE EDITORS

The Jesuits have had a long history of receiving threats; none of this started yesterday. These killings did not happen by chance. Since 1980 there have been several attacks on the university, and our house was destroyed in 1983; the computer center, the library, the printing building have all been attacked. Why? Because we supported dialogue; that was considered treason.

But the Jesuits were confident nothing would happen now because the house was surrounded by the military who would be held responsible. The cook and her daughter were staying in the house because they thought it was safer than their own little house close to the road.

Ellacuria [Ignacio Ellacuria, S.J., rector of the university] has been very active in working for peace and diaogue. Recently he had two private talks with President [Alfredo] Cristiani. In our minds and many others, we were working not for the government, not for the FMLN [Farabundo Martí Liberation Front], but to end the war. So these deaths are tragic and paradoxical.

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I have loved these men and worked with them many years. It has been difficult to accept their deaths; I feel a great loss, an irreparable loss. But as Christians —the pope, bishops, liberation theologians—we all know from Puebla and Medellin of the option for the poor. We live in El Salvador, as elsewhere, in the world amidst poverty. For the poor simply to live, to survive, is difficult. It is their daily task. They don't take life for granted. It is not the will of God that the poor live like this. We cannot believe in the Jesus Christ sent by God without taking this option for the poor.

In 1975 we Jesuits said our mission today is to defend faith and justice. Both go together. You know usually universities don't care too much for faith and justice. But now we understand the university as a social force working for faith and justice. What happened to the Jesuits, to Archbishop Oscar Romero, to the American churchwomen happens all over the world to priests, to sisters, to catechists, to peasants. The idols of this world bring death to people who work for justice. The Jesuits have been killed because they loved their brothers and sisters. They freely gave up their lives for this. In this world of injustice they have shown their love for men and women. From this love comes hope. That is the Christian response to these deaths.

As for the killers: as Christians and human beings, we are ready to forgive. We don't want more deaths. We want to call these people to conversion. Archbishop Romero, just before he was killed, said it: "I say now I forgive and bless those who will kill me."

But these are individuals. It is the structures allowing this kind of killing that we have to fight—the structures that produce the slow death through poverty. We must work to change these structures or these killings will go on, not just in El Salvador but all over Latin America where things are getting worse. In all of this the government is not too important. Rather it is those who control the country: the extreme right, the oligarchy, the death squads, and some members of the army. They are in control. It is they who harass the churches—the Episcopalians, the Lutherans, the Mennonites, as well as the Catholic church. These obscure forces do not want Christians who believe in faith and justice. They want to go back to the old religion where you simply accept everything that happens. They don't want Christians who follow Jesus of Nazareth. There are different understandings of what the church should do and be. These differences are not rooted in dogmatic questions, but in the kind of commitment we should have in the face of poverty. There are those who do not want to commit themselves. Others do. But how can you say you believe in God and do nothing about that commitment? In that sense ecumenism is easy in El Salvador; the poor have united us.

So these attacks on the churches are an effort to dismantle the work for faith and justice; to make our efforts ineffective by killing and terrorizing. But that won't happen. At the funeral Mass, the papal nuncio said these men were martyrs. This is the most eloquent way of saying they were good Christians. That means ideally that the churches will stay, that the work will continue.

The decision to go on has been made by the Jesuit provincial. The Society of Jesus and the university have not been killed. Of course, it will be difficult; the group will be hard to replace. But a great number of Jesuits from all over the world have volunteered to come and work in the university.

About the political situation, I have no very clear personal opinion. But I can say this. It seems that the FMLN hoped in their attacks in San Salvador for two things. First, they wanted to bring about a general uprising, which did not take place, but everyone knew that it would not. The public opinion polls show that all the people want is peace. Second, the FMLN wanted to show that they had real power, that they were not just a small group. They could then go back to negotiations having shown their power. It is unlikely that the guerrillas will ever take over, but if they did, Stalin would not come to El Salvador.

I don't think the current administration in Washington will withdraw aid. But in any case, Americans should understand that the problem in El Salvador is not political. It goes much deeper; it is a problem of poverty. Americans' first effort should be to understand why many in El Salvador, as elsewhere, live inhuman lives. Americans must ask themselves, "What should we do to be in solidarity with these people?" If the problem of poverty is not solved, conflict will always arise, conflict that will be interpreted in a political way.

Please understand, life in Central America is not as it is in the U.S. With war in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, things become worse. There are casualties, violations of human rights, an increase in refugees. Twenty percent of Salvadorans have been forced to leave.

The war will not end militarily. It has to end through negotiations. A new policy is needed, not to keep the fighting alive,

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but to keep on pressure so that both sides will negotiate. Otherwise, you see that the terrible things that have happened and still happen become normal.

Americans need to take this time to analyze what is happening; it is not only a political problem but a human problem. Your readers should feel so concerned that these events become a call to conversion, a call to think and act differently. You know Christian faith is a little bit crazy. It is not for "sound" people. In the United States and Europe you are very highly developed, you have technology and wealth, but you have difficulty in finding a meaning to life. Wealth is not the best companion of Christian faith. El Salvador does not have weapons, or wealth, or technology to offer; but it has something of higher value to offer, the meaning of life. It has hope to offer. In the face of these many tragedies, there is still a feeling of community, of overcoming individualism and selfishness. In El Salvador the life of faith makes sense.

For Americans then, I would say, these events have two meanings. First, there is the challenge to see that "we have to change ourselves." Second, that these events are Good News, as we say the Gospel is the Good News—there is hope; there is love in the world. The crucified people of El Salvador show it.

JON SOBRINO

Jon Sobrino, S.J., is professor of philosophy and theology at the University of Central America in San Salvador. His latest book is Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness *(Orbis, 1988).*

LETTER FROM WEST BERLIN

EUPHORIA & BEYOND

NEW IMMIGRANTS & OLD

It's almost time—for some, the time has already come—for sober second thoughts about the piercing of the Berlin wall. But first the moment must be savored. Even on a television screen (we in West Berlin watched too), it was a remarkable sight. Experienced firsthand, it was stunning.

A detail: Some describe that first night (November 9) as the time when the *Volkspolizei* (the East German "people's police") learned to smile. It was truly strange to see those cold stares turn to smiles. But there was, of course, much more. Some 800,000 East Berliners crowded into the center of West Berlin that weekend, free for the first time in twenty-eight years. There were laughter and tears, elation, joy, euphoria as the people of the two Berlins joined to celebrate a massive outdoor festival resembling New Year's Eve in Times Square. The first arrivals were welcomed with flowers, champagne, coffee, cake, and schnapps, as though they were long-lost relatives or the unexpected survivors of a major catastrophe. As indeed they were.

The suddenness of the event created a spontaneity and flexibility unknown in Berlin. Strangers talked to strangers in a city where people don't look one another in the eye. Rules were set aside, exceptions were made; banks, post offices, and shopping centers opened without regard for the union-negotiated, government-enforced official schedules. Extra subway and elevated trains were put into motion, running more frequently and for longer hours than usual.

Visitors from the East got free admission to events regular and special. Daniel Barenboim and the Berlin Philharmonic offered a free afternoon concert as did the German opera company. Museums, the aquarium, and the zoo welcomed East Berliners without charge. East and West rock bands organized an all-night concert in the *Deutschlandhalle*, one of the city's largest indoor arenas.The local economy boomed, fueled by the 100-mark gift presented to each East Berliner on presentation of an identity card. It was a weekend marathon.

News is a problem: there is too much to absorb. Since the first exodus of thousands through Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the flow of information about the other Germany has been unrelenting. It escalated with the masses who marched the streets of Leipzig, Dresden, and East Berlin, chanting "*Wir sind das Volk*"—"We are the people"—and again on the day Erich Honecker was replaced by Egon Krenz. Our local paper has been carrying four extra pages daily about East Germany. We hear the names of people and groups we had never heard of before; for the first time we listen to their once-stodgy radio news and TV talk shows.

Some looked to the future. On November 10, Willy Brandt, former mayor of Berlin and onetime chancellor of West Germany, speaking from Berlin's city hall, said, "We are now in a situation where that which belongs together may grow together." He was hardly the first to think about reunification. "Imagine what the German economy united with the East can offer Europe and the EEC," a German friend remarked.

But the future is not that easy to see, except that the euphoria will not last forever. Indeed, on the Monday morning after that first weekend, many West Berliners were relieved to find life had returned to normal. The great majority of their guests had gone back home, some crying, "See you next week!" And they did; on the following weekend nearly one-and-a-half million Easterners came to West Berlin. But only some 10,000 registered as immigrants; of the eight million visitors arriving here and elsewhere in West Germany since the borders were opened, only one-half of 1 percent expressed an intention to settle permanently.

One reason for relief was the housing shortage. Even before November the city's hotels, pensions, and emergency housing facilities were already jammed, this because of the numbers of East German settlers,"*Übersiedler*," who had entered in previous weeks via Hungary and Czechoslovakia along with the ethnic German "*Aussiedler*" who have come within the past year from Poland, Rumania, and the Soviet Union. In this situation, housing

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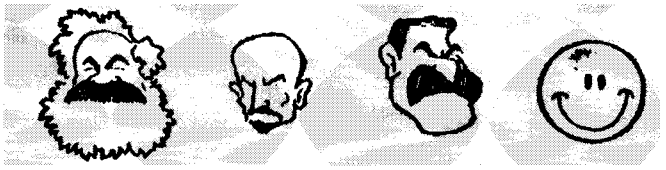

had to be improvised for the weekend visitors. Many West Berliners opened their homes to their "brothers and sisters" from the East. Tents were put up, churches opened, parts of airport buildings and the hallways of shopping centers were made available.

But there will be more permanent immigrants, and other changes difficult to foresee. What will this mean for Berlin itself, for the country, and for Europe?

West Berlin is a "green city" with a population of two million. In the sixties and seventies it was seen alternately as the center of the extraparliamentary opposition and as the "showcase of the West"—maintained as such, in pointed contrast to the drabness of East Berlin, by subsidies from the West German government. In this period it was a city of students and the aged, largely dependent on foreign workers, and plagued by capital flight. But in the past decade remarkable changes have taken place. Alongside an exotic subculture of alternative life styles and autonomous groups (the little Istanbul of Berlin's Turkish quarters, and more recently its controversial Polish markets), the wealth and luxury of the West German economy have grown pervasively visible.

Well into the eighties, nevertheless, West Berlin remained the city in Germany and in Europe where urban life was comfortable, uncrowded, decentralized, and rich in cultural diversity. Migration is changing all that. This momentum first became visible to the rest of the world after Hungary opened its borders to the West in September. But since 1987 the flow of Germans from East Germany and ethnic Germans from Central Europe has steadily mounted. Even before that, there were the Poles—during the eighties the city's fastest growing population group. Some 20,000 are officially registered, but the number reaches 100,000 if one includes those who entered as ethnic Germans, as tourists, those seeking refugee status, and entrepreneurs. Before the wall opened many thousands of Poles came on weekends to sell food, vodka, cigarettes, and baby clothes—purchased at home at subsidized prices—at the unlicensed Polish market. The labor market has been flooded with thousands of illegal Polish workers willing to work long hours, day and night, without insurance and health benefits, for half the wages of a registered laborer. The income and currency gaps between Poland and the Federal Republic are so vast that many Polish academics and qualified technicians are among the workers flocking into Germany. Engineers paint houses and work on construction. A Polish judge is employed as a cleaning woman. Another Polish woman takes the train from Wroclaw (Breslau) in the morning and returns the same night, to do one day's cleaning in the offices of a therapist who practices in my neighborhood. It pays to commute for one day's work.

Questions rise. Will East Berliners' new freedom to visit as often as they like, and perhaps to moonlight on the labor black market at low wages, create a permanent high unemployment rate? Will the standard of living begin to polarize here as in U.S. urban areas? Will the numbers of homeless people keep on growing? Welcoming migrants from East Germany and Eastern Europe is costly; it could mean the reduction or elimination of programs planned for the education of women and of foreigners who have been here for more than two decades. In the euphoria of East-West solidarity, what is seen as a victory of capitalism over socialism might bring the decline or disintegration of the progressive, socially responsible left.

Before the opening of the wall, West Berliners were engaged in serious debates over proposals to include the settled foreign worker population in a multicultural society. Among the initiatives discussed were municipal voting rights for foreign residents and dual citizenship for the German-born children of foreigners. Such measures, and other social programs, were part of the the coalition agreements between the ruling Social Democrats and the Greens. But the tremendous shortage of housing and the cost of supplying new units have compromised the coalition's ability to carry out their pledges.

Another question may have larger implications: Will monoculturalism and national pride again dominate German politics? It doesn't have to be the case. But many foreigners here perceive this as a looming danger. In conversations, my West German colleagues have been quick to point out that "they"—the Easterners—will probably be more xenophobic than "we"; they show disdain for their 150,000 Vietnamese "guest workers." It's possible too, and something to worry about, that the new settlers from the East, fed up with communism and seeking their Germanic roots, will provide new potential for the far right "*Republikaner*" party.

Xenophobia and ethnic stratification already exist in the West, and may be intensified. An American friend watching the hundreds of thousands rushing through the wall on November 10 was told by her German neighbor, "Now we can send those Poles back!" Similar reactions are of concern to the 150,000 Turks living in Berlin. They are already seen as second-class citizens. Ranking above them are not only settlers from East Germany and the ethnic Germans from other Soviet bloc states, who have an automatic right to West German citizenship on entering the country, but also migrants from European-community countries and the Polish-Poles, whose irregular status has been largely ignored. In the social hierarchy Turkish workers and their families stand near the bottom, just above refugees from the third world. The Turks, once hopeful of equal status within the European community, see their position destabilized by the latest developments. How many Germans feel like the author of the graffiti scrawled on the Berlin wall: "Foreigners, please don't leave us alone with the Germans!"

Developments have come with a rapidity beyond belief. As an American who moved to West Berlin in 1968, I found it hard to understand how people could live in so repressive a society as East Germany's, with such great and obvious gaps between its proclaimed "socialist" democracy and its rigid, authoritarian, paramilitary structures. The media, totally controlled, were channels of pure propaganda and blatant hypocrisy. And the

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people—at least, the East Germans I met—were well aware of all this. Yet the structures appeared to be so fixed, police control so rigid and pervasive, that as recently as a year ago we thought that change in the German Democratic Republic was still far off, not to be seen in our lifetime.

Given that conviction, nobody, East or West, talked much about German reunification. Now, it's an inevitable topic in both Germanys, one that has gained greater legitimacy since the Leipzig demonstrators of November 20 waved the banner reading "Germany: a single fatherland!" Though some have warned that public opinion polls in East Germany may not be scientific enough to be trusted, surveys have become more frequent, and the most recent found that 61 percent of respondents were favorable to reunification as a political objective. A similar survey in West Germany discovered that 60 percent of those interviewed would favor reunification even at the cost of German neutrality.

That is a stunner not just for Germany but in all of Europe and beyond. German politicians are aware of the sensitivities of their allies and neighbors to this issue, and everyone is bending over backwards to recognize that, while the two parts of Germany may belong together, their union can only be discussed in the context of general European development. In East Germany, not even the opposition to the establishment is unanimous on this score, as is evident from a comment by Bärbel Bohley, one of the founders of the opposition group, New Forum. "It can't be," she said, "that we've lived forty years for nothing, and that the future holds no more for us than to become just another state of the Federal Republic of Germany."

Evidently, much else lies ahead before the last word will have been spoken. Meantime, Berliners feel they are living in the center of the world. CZARINA WILPERT

Czarina Wilpert is an American sociologist living in West Berlin. She has engaged in research on labor migration between West Germany and Turkey and in the comparative study of new ethnic minorities in Europe.

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

RULES OF THE GAME

DEMOCRACY & ITS LIMITS

A couple of things came together recently to make me think about the glories and limits of democracy. One of them is obvious, and is on everyone's mind these days: the wonderful and startling movement toward democracy, and away from communism, in almost every part of Eastern Europe.

There are, of course, many uncertainties ahead, and there will probably be truly frightening times; I'm not the first person to say this. Communism, a bad idea, will be replaced by other bad ideas. It should be remembered that ugly as well as good things have been suppressed in the Soviet Union. Not only is democracy on the rise now; so is a renewed anti-Semitism, in a few strange Soviet groups, as well as nationalism in its narrowest form, and old ethnic and religious conflicts. (One important example is the situation of Ukrainian Catholics, who are now more vocal in their demand for religious autonomy, something opposed by the Orthodox church, with which the Ukrainian Catholic church was forcibly united in 1946. This was a shameful episode in the history of Russian Orthodoxy, and it does little good to point out that groups of Orthodox Christians had been forcibly united with Catholicism in the past, except to remind us all how badly the alleged followers of Jesus can behave when they see their own advantage.)

Nevertheless, this movement is wonderful. There are some moments in the bloody history of the twentieth century that give us reason for hope. One is Gandhi's approach to nonviolent revolution in India, which brought a generally peaceful end to colonial rule. Another is the relative success of the civil rights movement in America—relative, because the issues of race and class in America are far from having been solved. The success of Solidarity in Poland is still another reason for hope (this can be seen as the beginning of everything happening in Eastern Europe now), and the peaceful removal of Marcos in the Philippines is another. Now all of Eastern Europe is moving, peacefully on the whole, toward a degree of freedom none of us thought would happen in our lifetimes, and if it did happen, we felt sure, it would not come like this, like a sudden tidal wave. Even Bulgaria is showing signs of change, and as I write there are massive demonstrations demanding change in Czechoslovakia. Rumania and Albania (possibly the worst country in the world, where making the sign of the cross is a criminal offense) squat-like monsters in the margins of an old map, isolated and strange, now looking a little archaic.

Our century has seen Turks murdering Armenians; Nazis murdering Jews, gypsies, the retarded, homosexuals, Communists, Slavs; Stalin murdering resisting peasants and anyone else who got in his way; the Pol Pot regime murdering every noncompliant Cambodian. If the horrors of so many mass murders have made this century a low point in human history, these alternative movements tell another human truth, a profoundly encouraging one.

So much of this drive for freedom has been hailed as a sign of democracy's strength and deep appeal, and so it is. But the other thing that made me think about democracy was a celebration for a friend who was moving from one very political job to another; a number of people were there, members of different political parties and varying ideologies, all united in respect and affection for someone who is good at politics.

I work at the edges of state government, and grew up in a political town. There is a cynicism that can come from that sort

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of exposure, but you have to earn it. It is too easy to say of politicians that they are all crooks, though some of them certainly are. But, granting the fact that self-interested egoists are a definite and apparently permanent part of the system, and granting the existence of a lot of greedy, self-interested people at the center and on the fringes of government, there are also a surprising number of dedicated and even idealistic politicians and staff people, who (whether liberal or conservative) believe not only in the rightness of their ideology, but genuinely want to do good work for the public.

What interests me is that the people who do this work best over the long haul are the people who treat it like a game and—this is important—love it like a game. They last the longest, and make the most significant changes, to the extent that they are good at it. The people who don't do it well over the long haul are those whose ideological seriousness (or personal ineptitude) keeps them from understanding the limited process a democracy always is.

I have to be careful when I speak of treating democracy like a game. I don't mean at all that these people take it lightly, or think of it as merely amusing, or that they scorn idealism. But they realize something idealists and ideologues, right and left, frequently do not understand.

That is the fact that issues, no matter how important (abortion, housing, the homeless, capital punishment, education) are—like a politician's personal appearance, glibness, and ability to seem sincere on television—counters in a game, pieces to be placed on the board and moved around. You may or may not care about most of them; some you may be willing to play in a risky fashion. But you'd better know their real worth; and when they don't count, however much you might wish they did, you'd better not play them. In chess you might have a particular affection for the knight or the bishop; but those pieces have a limited use, and not to understand when not to play them is to lose the game. The point for the people who are best at the political game is beating the people they find themselves against. They may find themselves regarding an issue such as abortion or unemployment, for example, primarily as a pawn that can be played against the opponent's opposite number. This is cynical, when the issue is regarded only as a piece in the game. The issue may indeed have a value greater than that for a candidate; but however he or she may feel, the candidate must remember how limited its use is.

The people who are best at it, like the best athletes on opposing teams, usually have no real enmity because the system is not about the victory of one idea or point of view over another, but about which team ends up with the most power. Our political parties have no solid ideology, but care a lot about their own side winning. (One demonstration of this fact is the recent attempt on the part of a lot of Republicans to move toward where they perceive the center of the abortion issue to be, once they got a hint that a strictly prolife position might not benefit them.)

This makes a certain amount of sense. It keeps enough of the public satisfied that public interests are being served to keep the people who know how to play the game in power—they get to keep playing, which is what matters to them—and it keeps one kind of tyranny at bay. This fact is what makes polls important, as terrible as they may be. They have been accused of making politicians too concerned with the most simple and superficial formulations of public opinion; but ever since Plato's *Gorgias* we have been warned that oversimplification is a danger inherent in democracy, and the tyranny of a stupid majority is a constant danger.

Not much more can be expected from the system than this little, but very important, work. Like all systems, our form of government aims at stasis, and has to be moved from the outside, either by groundswells of public opinion or by the more dramatic expressions of unrest and opposition that worry people who want to remain in power. But a little more can be derived from the system, if not expected from it. Someone who understands the limits of democracy can tilt it, moving some good things closer to fruition, and some good causes closer to the center of public attention. This means going above and beyond ideology, and, again, understanding the system as a game in the most serious sense of that playful-sounding word. Good liberals and conservatives know when to quit, when to shift the language of an argument if it won't play to the masses.

Democracy as a positive ideology—an assumption that mass opinion contains real wisdom, that the majority will be reasonable more often than not—is a bad idea. It is best as a negative thing, a system that allows so many opinions and interests to carry political weight that no single interest or faction can overpower the others. That may sound cynical but, as the demonstrations in freedom's favor show, it is no small thing. We have grown so used to living without tyranny that we do not count that daily fact of life as a positively good thing. However, to expect more of democracy than the prevention of overt tyranny is dangerous. It can lead us to expect of law and politics what we once expected of culture and religion.

The way in which the abortion issue has degenerated into a discussion of what should or should not be legal is a good example of this. In a reasonable society we would worry more about what we are here for than about what we ought to forbid. The fact that we have no common language with which we can speak at this level, in a pluralistic society, is a problem, one with no simple solution. But it is particularly important for religious people to look beyond a merely legal or political form of discourse (which is always, at bottom, about coercion) when such profound questions of human value come before us.

The people of Eastern Europe are right to expect freedom and its best governmental form, democracy, as a human right; but where we expect democracy to deal well, or even adequately, with the most important questions of meaning and value we expect far too much of it. □

Correction: A line or two in my last column got dropped somewhere in between my manuscript and print. This was the original form: "The tragedy is that our response, which is something different from our feelings about God or our relationship to God, is so cold and half-hearted. But perhaps this is because unlike our usual loves, for wives and husbands, friends, and children, this love is not obviously reciprocated...or the reciprocation is so primary and all-enveloping that we cannot see it."

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TAKING PAINS TO SEE

THE MANY FACES OF JESUS

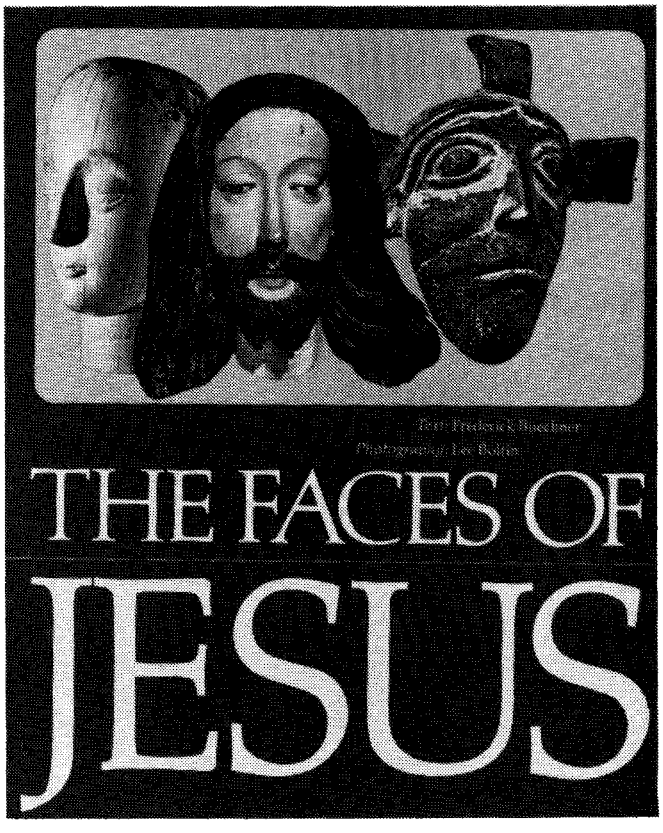
LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM

The great eighth-century theologian, John of Damascus, defended the use of icons with an appeal to the doctrine of the Incarnation framed, at the same time, as an argument against idolatry: "I do not worship matter. I worship the creator of matter who became matter for my sake, who willed to take his abode in matter, and who through matter wrought my salvation." John's concern was to establish the orthodoxy of icons in the church, but his insight has a far wider applicability in the Christian Catholic tradition. What he touched on, in short, was a fundamental insight: Christ is a visible sign of the love of God. The entire sacramental impulse roots itself in that truth which stands at the very heart of the Christian faith, to wit, that the evanescent Word became palpably experienced as flesh.

The "sign value" of Christ, however, is a two-way street. He shows us what the love of God means and we, in turn, see Christ as the template by which we judge our own relationship to God. There is more than pulpit rhetoric in the drumbeat insistence that everyone who follows Christ must bear him in their being, see him in others, and extend his presence in the world. Jesus himself tells us to find him in the hungry, thirsty, imprisoned, and deprived (Matt. 5:31-46). The Gospel also tells us that we will recognize him as resurrected Lord in the hearing of the word and the breaking of bread (Luke 24:28-33). At the same time, his presence is tantalizingly allusive. We must beware of those who tell us that he is here or in some other place (Matt. 24:23ff).

It is that complex conviction, I suspect, by which we have assurance that Christ can be met and known (in others; in prayer; in liturgy), as well as the elusive nature of all that Christ is that has led people to try and flesh out the silences that stand behind the text of the Gospel and the glosses upon it. It is that tension between knowing and not knowing that explains, in large part, why people have produced religious art. Since the Gospels never tell us what any of the *dramatis personae* look like (apart from Zachaeus whom Luke describes as "short"), the artist tries to supply the details or dramatize the salient characteristics given by the text: what does a treacherous Judas look like? How depict a doubting Thomas or a Mary who "stores up all things in her heart" or an impetuous Peter? What does one "say" in paint in order to depict a face of Christ which, when seen, would convert a person immediately (something Georges Rouault once said he wanted to do)? Christian art stands, inevitably, at the interstices of the Gospel text both as written and as heard in proclamation. All Christian art is reader-response art.

Christian art has its own history and that history is not a linear one. It is not clear to me when the beardless Christ of paleo-Christian art definitively gave way to the bearded Christ of Byzantium (one finds both in Ravenna), but the shift must have indicated more than stylistic change. Similarly, if a contemporary



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Rosemary Deen

INFANT AND MARTYRS

For Anne Robertson

The infant Christ begins as lamb
or mangered animal. In paintings
he touches the pelt his infant
cousin already wears. Or
curved into his mother's arm
he is flanked by martyrs.

The natural human core
mother and child, casts
an easy naturalness over it all.
Having suffered, Mantegna's martyrs
are bookish. John, animal
skin swaddled in crimson
bends into his reading. Lawrence
the cruelest tortured one
here the most beautiful
stands just touching his grill.

Outside on the doors a primitive
bronze Isaac is perched in a nest
of faggots like a young stork
his other ram self, briar-meshed
looks like a lion. The niceness
of angelic rescue lifts
merely the tip of Abram's sword.
Elsewhere urgency heightens grace as
column-compressed, heels aloft
the angel in a piercing vertical
seizes Abram's wrist
to stop the knife's descent.

The matter of suffering
in an earlier age was
inescapable: squalor
the unrelieved liabilities
of the body, and torment commonplace.
But they were young and learned
love from Plato.
Idea longs for Archetype.
Blinded by evidence
we carve shapes out of it.

In Venice, infant
mother & saints, city & botany
come forward to a white cloth
on the ground unfurling
whited light in folds.
Power over others implies
the sacrifice of the weak.
Powerful beauty embeds the tortured
death of all these persons
in a *sprezzatura* emblem
of the painter's mastery
purified of his own labor
a silken whole, unsweated
sweet with glory—I
for one will not resist it.

Back of the Sistine altar
Michaelangelo painted
himself as St. Bartholomew
and holds out to us his flayed
skin hanging in smoky folds
still human
in the downward drowned
lines of the face—
sacrifices to the other Plato
all reason & justice
going on around him.

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artist wished to paint, say, a Last Supper, she would have to decide how much of the tradition she wished to shake off as her composition was planned. The once popular *Last Supper* of the great religious schlockmeister of our time, Salvador Dali, reeked of borrowings from Leonardo and Tintoretto. Must we pay homage to that past or must there be clean breaks with a tradition read differently? And if the latter, then what happens to the notion of tradition?

The above thoughts ran through my mind as I paged through two new "Christmas books" that came across my desk this fall: *The Life of Christ: Images from the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (Metropolitan Museum/Scribners, $22.50, 96 pp.) and *The Faces of Jesus* (Harper & Row, $19.95, 256 pp.). The former provides a series of art works with juxtaposed citations from the Gospels (thus narrating a "life" of Christ as the title promises) while the latter has a text written by the well regarded novelist (and ordained minister), Frederick Buechner.

The Metropolitan's *Life of Christ* is just what you would expect of a book that bore its imprint: handsome, judiciously selected, and lushly illustrated. It is, however, very much a gift book. Apart from the intrinsic education (and pleasure) one gets from looking at the pictures, there is little here to nourish or encourage a sense of study. For example, no dimensions are provided and, thus, a sense of scale is easy to lose: a thirteenth-century page from an English psalter gets a full-page treatment as does a large painting like Edouard Manet's brilliant chiaroscuro painting of *The Dead Christ with Angels*. Again, a sixteenth-century majolica plate depicting the Magdalen and Christ is reproduced in the same size as a much smaller eighth-century Byzantine reliquary which depicts the Ascension. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with a blown-up photograph of a small object, but an indication of size does help one appreciate the virtuosity of the artist. It also helps one to approach a work of art with sensitivity to the end that the artist had in mind when executing the work: a large painting is a public work in a way that a majolica plate was never intended to be.

The Metropolitan's *The Life of Christ* is, in short, the coffee table book *par excellence*: glossy photos and minimal text designed for a thoughtful turning of the page with a pause now and then to admire the wonderful works which the museum possesses. It is, then, more a book about the museum than about the life of Christ. Once one accepts that limitation, it becomes a perfectly acceptable gift for the person who loves beautiful things.

The Faces of Jesus, by contrast, has a somewhat more ambitious aim: it wishes to instruct and please. The illustrations (again, irritatingly, without dimensions) are culled from a wide variety of sources. There are art works from the great museums of the world as well as smaller works ranging from ivory carvings to fabrics. What is most striking, however, is the vast array of contemporary art from the non-Western world. There are wonderful Japanese serigraphs by Sadao Watanabe, a glorious virgin and child in polychromed wood from Melanesia, and a number of striking fabric works by the American artist, Norman LaLiberté; as well as a generous representation of children's art. Some of the more interesting pieces are contemporary ones. There is a powerful wooden head of Christ with a crown of thorns from Africa; an angular Melanesian wooden crucifix (which puts the angular paintings of Bernard Buffet, also shown, to shame); and a moving ink and watercolor crucifixion by an Italo-American artist, W.C. Mirico, which pays homage to the Grünewald crucifixion. One of the most striking works is a wooden figure of Christ, boxed in a plain rectangular shape, with one arm thrust through the box and pinned by a long nail. This work by the Swedish sculptor, Torsten Renqvist and a bronze *Last Supper* by the Greek artist Dmitri Florentinos with echoes of the formalism of Arp are among the few works in the book which attempt to execute that most treacherous of marriages: between modernism and traditional religious iconography.

The Faces of Jesus is divided into six large sections: Annunciation, Nativity, Ministry, Last Supper, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. The layout is quite handsome, the photographs are crisp, and the typography is easy on the eyes, with the first page in each section set in large bold print. All the photographs are in color.

Buechner's very readable text which accompanies the art is—and this should come as no surprise—quite literary. Buechner is interested in the "story" that the illustrations "tell" as opposed to the formal "story" of the art itself. Nor is there much in the way of functional analysis. LaLiberté is, for example, an artist with close ties to the liturgical movement in the United States. His art—or at least a good portion of it—should be seen in the context of worship. We get very little help with context while looking at the very diverse works which are in this text. I kept asking myself whether the many Swedish works were done under church patronage or as museum/collector pieces. What was the original impulse (liturgical, pedagogical, gallery specific) behind the art of the non-Western world? What Buechner has given us is pertinent and, in places, moving, but in the end it makes us wish for a serious study of Christ in the art of this century. The one thing that I most heartily second, after studying both of these books for some weeks, is Buechner's observation about the face of Christ in the introduction to his book: "Like the faces of people we love, it has become so familiar that unless we take pains we hardly see it at all. Take pains."

And, in fact, it requires some pains to see. The Met's *Adoration of the Shepherds* by Andrea Mantegna forces us to search for the infant Jesus amid a very complex scene which uses not only Jesus and Mary as part of the frame but the shepherds (some close; others far) as well as the natural world of animals, trees, and mountains. The complexity, I think derives not from sheer bravado but from a deep insight into the particularity of the Incarnation: the God-man was, after all, a babe who was surrounded by a rather large and not always friendly world. In fact, that instinct for complexity (a hallmark of Northern Renaissance painting) is, in its own oblique way, a witness to the palpable reality of the Incarnation.

By contrast, traditional icons (there are a number of them in

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Buechner's book) depict Christ straightforwardly looking out at the world. It seems simple enough until we take pains to see. We look over the shoulder of Christ into an infinite distance of gold leaf. Our task, to borrow the language of Eastern spirituality, is "to gaze." What is easy to forget, however, is that Christ is looking back at us as we live in a non-gold leaf and very tactile world of misery and pleasure. It is in that reciprocal relationship of gazing that the doctrine of icons makes best sense. Icons are not fundamentally for instruction; they are, rather, windows through which we see the mysteries of Christ in a direct and dialogical way.

And our contemporary art? It can be evocative to the extreme once we begin to see: the polychromed virgin and child from Melanesia with its angular Mary with flattened and somewhat desiccated breasts startles until we remember the mothers with children at the breast at famine relief centers in the Sahel. The odd, very nondevotional, felt banners of Norman LaLiberté jolt our preconceived notions of whom Jesus ought to look like, just as Bodini's bronze crucifixion with its horrifically pinned and crumpled corpus seems just the right image of a Christ sculpted in Europe in 1933.

Not everything modern works. We have alluded to the almost campy sentimentality of Dali but we could also point to the saccharine pictures of the German, Otto Dix (why not the Expressionist Emil Nolde?) or some of the more timid offerings from Scandinavia. It is the third world that seems to have the artistic energy today. It is sad that we did not have more examples from Latin America or from Africa where, judging from examples shown in some of our national magazines recently, the tradition of religious art is not only well but energetic and innovative.

Still, there is much to learn from taking the pains to look at this art. It is a source for both piety and theological reflections. Nearly a millennium ago, Saint Anselm of Canterbury wrote in the opening pages of his great treatise on the purpose of the Incarnation (*Cur Deus Homo*) that he was always indignant when a poor artist depicted Christ unworthily "with an ugly form." Happily, these books give us very few poor artists and, for that reason alone, we are in their debt. □

SHOULD I HAVE LET HIM IN?

A LEAP OF FAITH

THOMAS J. CRAUGHWELL

Late one night last spring, when the rain was falling heavily, one of my neighbors buzzed a vagrant into our building. It was 10:30 P.M. and I was putting my clothes together for work the next day when I heard someone making slow and stumbling progress up the stairs, dragging something heavy behind him. I stopped what I was doing and listened. I could hear the stranger panting and muttering in Polish as he stood before my apartment door.

Then he knocked.

"Yes?" I called out. "Who is it?" It was a stupid question. What could that man have answered that would have made me unlock the door and let him in?

He called something back to me, but I couldn't understand anything that he said.

"I'm sorry," I said. "I don't know you."

"No?" he called back, surprised. "No?" he repeated.

"No. I'm sorry."

About that time, Carol and Bill, my neighbors across the hall opened their door and came out to see what was going on. They acted as if they had handled situations like this a dozen times before. They tried to find out who the man wanted to see, where he wanted to go. They would not let him wander upstairs to the other floors of the building. They tried to rouse the Polish family downstairs to come and act as interpreters. When the man's plastic trash bag filled with odds and ends ripped open, they fetched him a new one. They refused to let him into their apartment and refused to let him camp out in the hallway. And finally, they "escorted" him out of the building, back into the night and into the rain.

I heard the whole exchange through my door, but I didn't come out until I heard the sound of something falling down the stairs. Carol was standing near my door. Her husband, Bill, was at the turning of the stairs trying to lift the stranger. The man himself was sprawled half on the landing, half on the steps to the foyer. He was very thin, a bit on the tall side. His dark hair and his ill-fitting clothes were soaked. His eyelids were heavy and his mouth hung open.

"Do you need a hand?" I asked.

"Nope," my neighbor said. "Everything's under control."

Bill made sure the man was not hurt, helped him to his feet, and half walked, half wrestled him out of our building. Bill closed the doors firmly and bounded back up the stairs where

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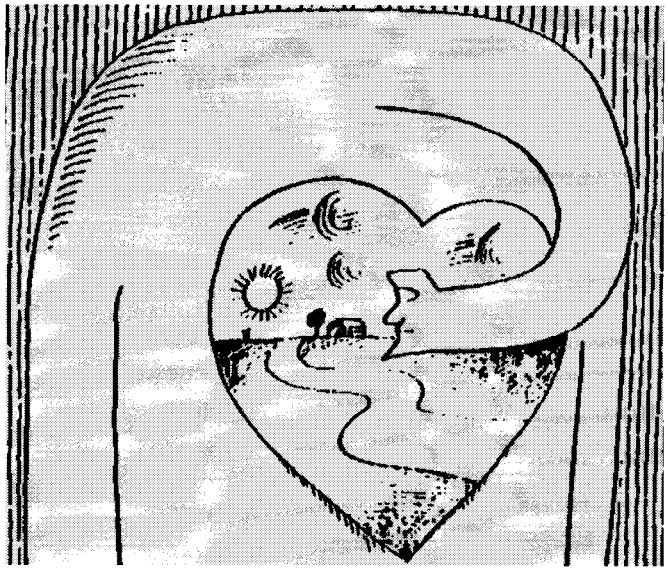
we three stood in the hall saying things like "Some night!" and "Good job!" and "Well, have a good evening!" and other dumb and inappropriate things. Then we went back into our apartments and locked the doors.

Back inside, I felt relieved and safe, but still a little edgy and also a little ashamed. There was no question in my mind that I would not have allowed that man into my home and let him spend the night there. He was a drunken vagrant and the idea of bringing him into my house scared me. In fact, just that he managed to get into my building, that he got through the intercom system and the electronically controlled door locks, that he stood at my door and asked to come in, unnerved me. For the first time since I had moved into this apartment, I was uneasy about my neighborhood. I had felt safe in my home and if I had never before thought of my apartment building as a fortress, now I felt as if my defenses had been breached. I felt vulnerable and at risk. Worse yet, I felt like a heartless son of a bitch. Everything that I have ever learned as a Catholic, or professed to believe as a Catholic, told me that I should have let him in, but when the faith came up against New York survival instincts, the faith lost.

When I was a little boy, it made me sad to think of Mary and Joseph wandering through the cold dark streets of Bethlehem looking for a place to spend the night. I used to indulge in a sentimental fantasy that I was the only person in Bethlehem who would give the Holy Family shelter and so the Christ Child was born in my room, in my bed. Later, when I could read, I was moved by the story of St. Martin of Tours dividing his cloak and giving half of it to a naked beggar. Today, I say that I admire the charity of Father Bruce Ritter taking homeless kids into his Bowery apartment, and Mother Teresa picking up the dying from the streets of Calcutta and carrying them home. On the streets and in the subways of New York, I hand out loose change to those who ask me until it is all gone. At Mass, I give money to the special collections for the poor parishes and for kitchens and shelters for the homeless. It makes me feel good. It makes me feel that I am doing *something* constructive. "I certainly don't have a solution for homelessness and poverty," I think to myself, "but at least I can do this much."

After that night last spring, I felt that I might as well have done nothing at all. Here was someone at my door who needed my help and I would not open to him. And if that man came back tonight I still would not open my door. I know that admission does not put me on the side of the saints. In fact, it puts me solidly in the camp of the character from Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities* who says that the only way to live in New York is to "insulate, insulate, insulate."

Since that spring night, it has occurred to me that what is missing in the stories of heroic sanctity is fear. Did you ever read that plague victims scared St. Roch half out of his mind? Of course not. The possibility that the saints were afraid of the poor, of the stranger, of the sick, of the dying is not addressed in the stories. And if you study the paintings and statues of the saints performing their acts of charity, you see that they were



not afraid because there was nothing frightening in the people who were receiving their assistance. Look at the depiction of St. Martin and the beggar, from El Greco's masterpiece to the banal illustration in a children's *Lives of the Saints*. The beggar looks pitiful, helpless, *harmless*; sometimes he is even a bit attractive. What was there to be afraid of? Besides, the exchange between the Roman officer and the beggar ended so well, with Christ appearing wrapped in half of Martin's cloak and praising Martin to the angels.

I know what I was supposed to do last spring. I was supposed to let that man in, get him into the shower, give him some dry clothes, some aspirin and coffee, and put him to bed. Then, in the morning, we could have found out where he belonged. But I did not do that because I was afraid of being hurt, or robbed, or even of suddenly becoming personally responsible for one of New York's thousands of homeless, if that is what he turned out to be. If I knew that it would all end well—a vision of Christ would not have been necessary—I might have unlocked my door. But there is no way of knowing the outcome of an act of charity.

It is a terrible thing to know that you have done something unkind and to realize that you would do the same unkindness all over again. My reasons for keeping my door shut and locked were purely selfish—I had no way of telling if this stranger was disoriented or violent. He may have been entirely harmless, a nice quiet drunk who just wanted to pass out on my couch. But I could not tell that from the way he looked or acted and I could not understand much of what he said. If I had let him in, I would have been taking a risk. Perhaps that is why there is so much misery in the world: even people who want to be of good will have trouble overcoming their fears of the men and women who need our help.

I have not resolved to give shelter to the next vagrant who makes his way into my building, but I have learned something about myself and about charity. It seems to me now that true charity—heroic, saintly charity—is not so much an expression of compassion as it is a very personal, very risky leap of faith. It is a leap that I still cannot force myself to make. □

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ANOTHER WAY TO PEACE

FRENCH CATHOLICS & THE MORALITY OF DEFENSE

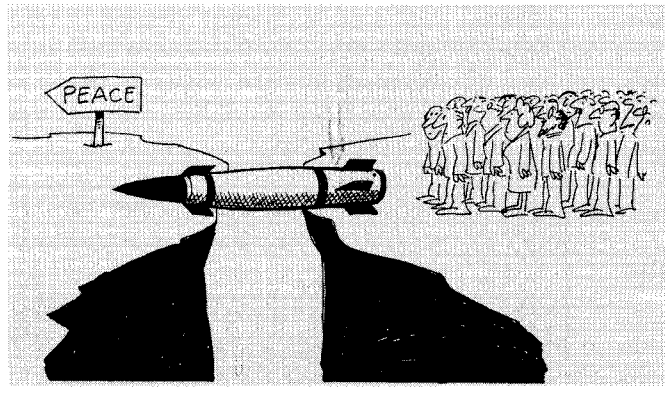
CATHERINE GUICHERD

The pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*, issued by the American Catholic bishops in 1983, roused concern at the time not only among some U.S. Catholics and military strategists, but also in Europe, and particularly in France, where the debate continues.

The French Catholic bishops had especially strong reservations about the U.S. bishops' letter. Following the release of the second draft of the American pastoral, Bishop Gerald Defois, then general secretary of the French bishops' conference, gave an interview to the French daily *Le Matin*, in which he openly rejected the American bishops' support of a nuclear freeze and a no-first-use policy. A few months later, the French bishops issued their own pastoral letter. While acknowledging that the French nuclear deterrent rests on the threat of an inherently immoral act—countercity strikes—they condoned the deterrent. Like the American bishops, they found justification in John Paul II's assertion that deterrence may be morally acceptable provided it is accompanied by genuine steps toward disarmament. In contrast to the highly critical U.S. letter, the French letter was widely interpreted as a gesture of support to the French government.

The attitude of the French bishops was very close to that of the French public and their letter generally enjoyed a positive reception. Still it was not without its critics, the sharpest dissent coming from Catholics involved in peace research and the peace movement. The most prominent included several priests and brothers: Pierre Toulat, executive secretary of the French Commission for Justice and Peace and a well-known human rights activist; Christian Mellon, an affiliate of the Jesuit research center C.E.R.A.S. in Paris and a pillar of the *Mouvement pour une Alternative Non-violente* (MAN); Bernard Quelquejeu, a Dominican brother and leading Catholic thinker on human rights; and Bernard Boudouresques, a representative of the "priest workers" movement. Lay people were also among the bishops' critics, including Philippe Warnier, a free-lance journalist and leader of *Vie nouvelle* ("New Life"), a spiritual renewal movement. Not only are they activists but also intellectuals. Indeed, they may be the tiny remainder of France's once influential school of progressive theologians. Although at odds with the church's official position on many social justice issues, they have been careful not to sever themselves from the establishment. As a consequence, they play a key role as mediators between the hierarchy and more radical grassroots groups. Their progressive opinion is usually welcomed in the Catholic press because it is theologically strong and introduces a healthy measure of pluralism in the church.

In 1983, discontent with the French bishops' letter was as much the result of its drafting process as of its content. Apart from an occasional conversation between Bishop Defois and a few handpicked representatives of Catholic opinion, almost no discussion preceded the final vote. The Commission for Justice and Peace, the bishops' main advisory body on international issues, had not even been consulted. The critics decided that the debate on national security in Catholic communities had to be broadened and that new ways of defending the country required investigation. A steering committee composed of Toulat, Mellon, Boudouresques, Quelquejeu, Warnier, and another Catholic layman, Christophe Deltombe, put a consultation process in place. At the beginning of 1984 they issued *A Call to Christians for a Debate on Defense*, with a questionnaire asking about various issues of national defense and the role of the church in the debate. About a hundred responses were received from individuals and groups involved in peace, social development, and human rights activities, and these were used to develop a first synthesis, distributed in May 1985. A second round of discussions led forty groups and a hundred individuals to propose amendments. After their incorporation, the final document was released in February 1986 under the title *La paix autrement* (Another Way to Peace). It was signed by five bishops, a large number of priests, some



CATHERINE GUICHERD, *author of* L'Eglise Catholique et la politique de défense au débout des années 1980: Etude comparatif de documents episcopaux, allemandes, américaines, et françiases of 1983 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988), *is currently living and working in Washington, D.C.*

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prominent figures in the Catholic world, including Gabriel Marc, president of C.C.F.D., the main French Catholic development agency, and a variety of groups, including several local Pax Christi chapters which dissented from the conservative views of their Paris office. Within a few months, 10,000 copies of the document had been distributed all over the country.

At the end of their pastoral letter, the French bishops had invited Catholics to explore the moral aspects of defense policy. *La paix autrement* capitalized on that invitation, but its positions conflicted with the bishops' on so many points that it looked like a "counterpastoral." In particular, it concluded, "It...no longer seems possible to tolerate nuclear deterrence, even under the justification of an ethics of distress." It also indirectly but decisively rejected the distinction drawn by the bishops between the threat to kill innocents and actually carrying out that threat. Further, it seriously questioned the pope's assessment that deterrence could be permitted if accompanied by meaningful steps toward nuclear disarmament.

However, this does not mean that *La paix autrement* indulged in a naive form of pacifism. It clearly upheld not only "the right, but the duty" of people to defend "the goods, the institutions, and the values that are the constituents and the conditions of its existence." Unlike the bishops' pastoral, which saw in nuclear deterrence the indispensable means of enforcing the right of self-defense for the foreseeable future, it counseled the development of a nonviolent, civilian defense as a realistic alternative.

In *La paix autrement,* the alternative is called "civilian dissuasion," and is defined as a planned, systematic noncollaboration with the enemy, organized in advance, on a national basis, with the participation of all government and private institutions and relying exclusively on nonviolent means of resistance. The concept, which originated in the work of MAN, received a good deal of attention when the government funded research on it in 1983. When the resulting study was published in 1985, military commentators appreciated the emphasis it put on the "spirit of defense," the absence of which they had so often lamented under the current system of deterrence, but they criticized the method as a "strategy of defeat" that would become relevant only after enemy occupation of the country. They successfully blocked an attempt by the authors of the study to declare that civilian dissuasion would lose its credibility if it were combined with armed defense. Although the concept of "civilian dissuasion" had high visibility in military circles for a time, it was not widely discussed elsewhere, and the attention it commanded in the defense establishment was short-lived.

In April 1987, following a "Call to Christians for a Debate on Nonviolent Action," a new consultation process was launched by the authors of *La paix autrement,* and in May 1988 a first version of a new document, *Lutter autrement: Pour une action non-violente, responsable et efficace* (Waging War Differently: For a Nonviolent, Responsible, and Effective Action), was released. The debate on this document was broader still, and it received more than 1,000 amendment proposals from forty-five groups and eighty persons. The final document was issued in October 1989.

Written at a time when international tensions are receding and the debate in the churches has become less antagonistic, the new document has lost the polemical tone of its predecessor and devotes its attention to in-depth research on nonviolence and its foundations rather than to searching for concrete alternatives to the present defense system. It is not so much a policy statement as a philosophical document. This may explain why thirteen bishops had no misgivings in approving it.

Two major points in *Lutter autrement* are worth emphasizing. First, the document establishes a tight connection between the ethic of nonviolence and an ethic of human rights. The final purpose of nonviolent action, so the argument goes, is the preservation and the restoration of human rights. Thus, the means employed to defend oneself must be devised so that "the physical, psychological, and spiritual integrity of the adversary is respected." In other words, even in the worst crisis, it should never be forgotten that one's enemy remains a human being.

The document's linkage of nonviolence to human rights presents two problems. First, it implies that people who reject nonviolent defense are not fully committed to respecting human rights. The second problem centers on the universalist claim of a human rights ethic. To the extent that nonviolence becomes an integral part of a human rights ethic, it implicitly affirms a claim to universality for that ethic. But there is a difficulty in trying to build a universal ethic grounded in a specific faith conviction. The authors of *Lutter autrement* make room for a secular, nonviolent ethic, but their argument is hard to reconcile with official church teaching, which ultimately anchors human rights in spiritual foundations.

Nevertheless, *Lutter autrement* is representative of a respectable school of thought in French Catholicism that has been boosted by the debates over the foundations of human rights that took place during the celebration of the bicentennial of the Revolution. The authors clearly belong to a minority of Christians willing to stand up against the French church's tendency to claim a monopoly on human rights and peacemaking, at least in theory, and to forget its own history. It is as important to them to provide the basis for a common action with nonbelievers in the promotion of human rights and nonviolence as it is to reassert their faith motivation. But they carry the argument too far when they assert that the implementation of a nonviolent ethic on purely secular grounds provides the criterion by which to measure the churches' own faithfulness to the Gospel.

The second major point to be made: the contradictions in *Lutter autrement,* sometimes on key issues, are both a weakness and a tribute to its pluralism. One such issue is the status of the "nonviolent ethic." One school of thought argues that the nonviolent ideal provides first principles that will absolutely shape the actors' behavior. A second argues that a nonviolent ethic offers a set of principles that will guide individual decisions in particular cases without providing ready-made solutions. Members of the first (pacifists) are convinced of the ethical necessity of nonviolence and regard it as the only acceptable response to all

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conflicts. Rejecting this approach as unrealistic and deceptively utopian, the second view sees nonviolent action as one response among many in any given situation, as subject to failure as any other; the moral use of violence remains a possibility.

Insofar as it grants this possibily, *Lutter autrement* is not a pacifist document. But its conclusion on this issue remains ambiguous, bearing testimony to the disagreement among its authors. The text reads: "In any case, one shall absolutely refrain from legitimizing violence at the very moment one accepts oneself to be under an absolute constraint to resort to it. Even if it is a 'lesser evil'—with complete awareness of the excesses this phrase has permitted—it is an evil." What does this mean, if not that the resort to violence can never be morally endorsed but is sometimes inescapable? This brings us very close to Michael Walzer's analysis of the "supreme emergency" in *Just and Unjust Wars*, where he argues that in some cases necessity leaves no other choice than to break the moral rules, with full consciousness of acting wrongly. Such a conclusion signals the demise of moral argumentation and has traditionally been rejected by Catholic moralists.

At the practical level, this debate raises the issue of compatibility between nonviolent and military defense. Most analysts of either conviction see no incompatibility in principle at the level of preparation. Real difficulties arise, however, when a threat demanding a response materializes. For its proponents, bringing nonviolence into play as a last resort, to be used only after the military solution has failed, is hardly satisfactory; reliance on violent means undermining the credibility of nonviolent action, which purports to establish a nonthreatening relationship with the adversary. But if nonviolent action is to become the first and sole means of resistance to an aggression, a clue has yet to be found for the transition period between the existing system of military defense and a pure nonviolent strategy. At the present stage of the debate, however, any recognition that nonviolent defense can be considered a legitimate topic for discussion as a valid tool of national security must be considered a significant step. If *Lutter autrement* succeeds in doing that, it will have achieved a valuable goal. □

SCREEN

TOOTH & CLAW

'CRIMES' & 'THE BEAR'

In *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, Woody Allen tries to be profound; often he succeeds. This is due largely to his writing and directing and to Martin Landau's performance as a New York doctor who considers murdering someone. In the second plot of the story, Allen relives the woesome love life of yet another of his schlemiel incarnations. Reversing his usual strength and weakness, Allen is better here at melodrama than comedy.

Allen plays a New York documentary filmmaker shooting a movie on his more famous brother-in-law, a comedian played by Alan Alda (who partly plays himself). Fortunately, Allen doesn't make Alda's smarminess likable; it's Hawkeye as a wisecracking monster. While this has bite, the breakup of Allen's marriage, his philandering with Mia Farrow (a producer), and competition with Alda for her hand have as much bounce as a medicine ball.

Nor does the double-plotting work as well as it did in *Hannah and Her Sisters*, which fused irony and lyricism. To parallel tragedy and comedy is quite a different matter. "Tragedy is comedy plus time," Alda cracks at one point. No: tragedy has a different texture, into which comic relief can erupt. Only someone who looks on film hyperintellectually could try to float *Crimes's* abstract design, then try to get by with fusing the plots by the thinnest of narrative links.

There are many people around who think Woody Allen (after several disasters rooted in his hyperintellectuality) is a great director; he's not. He's good; *Hannah* is one of the best films of the decade. But a great deal of what he touches doesn't turn into gold; if he had less confidence about that, he might be better. The issue is serious since it goes to the heart of haute couture false taste, the kind of showiness that is currently killing the teaching of literature: intellectual overesteem for pretension, brainy allusion, and nonstop wit. Check out the allusion to Joyce in *Crimes*: it's a symbol of the problem. The heart of film is storytelling, where Allen can often excel. He does in Landau's half of the story.

It's hard to figure out exactly why. Landau feels that he has gone on too long with a mistress (Angelica Huston); he wants the comfort of a simpler relation with his wife (the ever so radiant Claire Bloom). Huston won't accept rejection and threatens to ruin him. Not an evil man, he nevertheless considers bumping her off. Allen's direction of this sudden eruption of mortal sin in an ordinary, at worst, mediocre life has compelling power; he captures a serious tone without the forced moodiness that dominated his past imitations of Bergman (*Interiors*).

Even with some fine lines ("God is a luxury I can't afford," Landau says), Allen endows the tale with a moral austerity that gives it a genuine "existential" flavor; Landau makes you feel his own nausea at what he considers doing. *Crimes's* power is rooted in Landau's memories of growing up Jewish and his regrets that he did not listen to his father's moral strictures. Many of Allen's recent movies undercut liberal fundamentalism; in *Hannah*, he even dared to say homes can be happy. In *Crimes*, there is a clear, uncluttered sense of what sin is, enough to touch the soul. I was moved.

Nature has not been treated kindly in films of the eighties. *Never Cry Wolf, Koyaanisqatsi,* and *Gorillas in the Mist* stand as brave exceptions in a period when Hollywood treated the environment with benign neglect and a Hollywood president said, "trees cause pollution too." *Ghostbusters* pilloried an EPA bureaucrat who wanted to tie up Bill Murray's entrepreneurialism in red tape; Bill Cosby's *Leonard Part VI* vilified animal activists. Robots and computers, not animals,

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were the pets on screen.

Things have changed; new movies on environmental heroes are already in the works. A good herald of the new age is Jean Jacques Annaud's *The Bear*, which, despite some cloyingly sentimental moments, is a simple and beautiful burst of northwest wind to open the pores of the spirit. The film's sentimentality lies in its fable: in the British Columbia wilderness, a bear cub (Douce) loses his mother, then adopts a wounded male grizzly (Bart) as a substitute parent; on this level, *The Bear* is worse than a Disney film; it's a zoological version of the new "baby" movies.

The Bear's strength lies in technique: Annaud, who tried to catch the experiences of primitive man in *Quest for Fire*, here convincingly shoots the film to catch life from a bear's point of view. Much of the screenplay is silent, but for grunts and whimpers; only a few men (bear hunters on Bart's track) are involved; the rest of the dramatis personae are dogs, deer, and one sleek puma. The result is a startling freshness of perspective. *The Bear* recalls one of the best seventies' nature documentaries, the wordless *La Territoire des Autres*. Bart and Douce may not be members of the Actors' Guild but they are fine performers, whose mimicry of their trainers and each other makes for one of the most credible animal movies in years.

The filmmakers choose not to ignore many of the harsh facts of nature: bears are cruel to horses and dogs; dogs and the puma are cruel to bears; nature is bloody red in tooth and claw (though Annaud does censor direct views of torn bodies). His source is a Canadian novel by James Oliver Curwood, *The Grizzly King*.

The film doesn't engage in the clichéd defamation of man practiced by some environmental zealots nor does it elevate one species at the expense of others (the whole source of the problem of ecocide). The bear hunters pursuing Bart and Douce are simple, quiet men driven by economic imperatives, not greed or cruelty; one even has special affection for his airedale.

There are some excessively sentimental touches; Annaud anthropomorphically imagines dreams for Douce; an animal sex scene goes beyond Disney only to end up plain hokey. Still, I can't imagine how anyone could make a film about a bear cub and avoid cuteness. Like the young of many mammal species, bear cubs are cute: they frolic, nuzzle, frisk about, then conk out cold and sleep like logs. Even in a zoo, their spirit captivates their captors with its special comic grace. The best that art can do with such a subject is catch its simplicity with dignity

TOM O'BRIEN

SO MANY BOOKS, SO LITTLE TIME

The way we are (sigh)

PAUL BAUMANN

Warring, brawling, and whoring make up a good deal of Colonel David H. Hackworth's vainglorious odyssey in *About Face*. It's a life lived with an enviable intensity, and a certain savage dignity.

As a professional "warrior," Hackworth is something of a cross between Vince Lombardi and Steve McQueen. In a forced march of more than 800 pages, he takes us from the relative chivalry of the Allied victory in Europe to the dark treacheries of the Mekong Delta. A soldier's soldier, a stud, an animal, are the words Hackworth and his fellow adepts used to describe each other. Oh, there were other words for the notorious "Hack." Even traitor.

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Books Discussed in this Column

America Observed, *Alistair Cooke, Alfred A. Knopf, $19.95, 231 pp.*
More Like Us, *James Fallows, Houghton Mifflin, $18.95, 245 pp.*
About Face: The Odyssey of an American Warrior, *Colonel David H. Hackworth (U.S. Army, Retired) and Julie Sherman, Simon & Schuster, $24.95, 875 pp.*

At one time or another, Hackworth bent every rule, broke every commandment, countenanced every evil from the killing of prisoners to the whole-scale "liberation" of government property. But though his hands were bloodied and his heart uncircumcised, he lived by his own fierce moral code, and *About Face* is as good an antidote to the revisionist apologies for America's "noble" involvement in Vietnam as you are likely to get.

Unfortunately, Hackworth chronicles his life with a supply sergeant's obsessive attention to detail. *About Face* is a fascinating story told at preposterous length and in a regimented style. Our cantankerous hero loved everything about the army, right down to the parades, the shiny boots and polished brass, and he wants to account for every order, every exercise, and practically every bender. Ten thousand military acronyms and the nicknames of a thousand buddies detain us further. Let's look forward to the condensed *About Face*, for this is a story that needs editing as much as it needs hearing.

As a soldier, Hackworth was a man of almost freakish courage—he was the most highly decorated officer in the United States Army when he retired amid scandal in 1971. General Creighton Abrams, who commanded American forces in Vietnam, called

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him the best battalion commander he had ever seen. There doesn't appear to be much dispute on this point. Like Mick Jagger on stage or Michael Jordan on a court, Hackworth had the instincts of a prodigy on the battlefield. His raw nerve and composure in the face of death would have been signified by a halo in a less fastidious age.

But Hackworth, who won a battlefield commission in Korea at the age of twenty, also is reputed to be the model for Marlon Brando's megalomaniacal Colonel Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now*. Admitting to having gone "partway around the bend" in his final command, he concluded more than four years of duty in Vietnam outraged over the conduct of the war and in almost outright rebellion against his superiors. With a characteristic disdain for crossfire, he appeared on ABC's "Issues and Answers" in 1971 and spoke bluntly about the army's tactical failures, the fraud of "Vietnamization," and the senseless sacrifices of the war. It was a stunning plea from a man who loved the army more than anything else in the world, as his former wife and his children surely will attest.

Hackworth was always a volatile property. An orphan cared for fitfully by his grandparents, he fled reform school to join the Merchant Marine at fourteen in 1945. A year later he lied about his age and joined the army. Initiated into the infantry by World War II combat veterans, Hackworth got his first taste of guerrilla warfare sparring with Tito's Yugoslavia partisans in Italy in the late 1940s. More important, he was taught the fundamentals of "soldiering" by the quick-fisted NCOs he believes to be the heart and soul of the army. Warrior Hackworth preaches the fundamentals: The tougher the peacetime training, the fewer the wartime casualties. You believe him.

Hackworth lays the army's failure in Vietnam on the desks of those organizational wizards who substituted management for leadership, schooling for battlefield experience, and pettifogging for "NCO justice." In the "new look" army of the 1950s and 1960s, real soldiers were pushed aside by over-educated careerists, officers Hackworth dimisses as "ticket-punchers." When something more elemental and bolder was demanded on the battlefield, it was in short supply. One consequence was that in Vietnam friendly fire was responsible for as much as 20 percent of American casualties.

Somewhere Chesterton says there must be something good about war or so many good men would not have loved being soldiers. (And let's not forget Joan of Arc.) It's one of his hard sayings. Reading Hackworth you know what that passion is like. " 'Trust' was a magic word," he writes. "Trust meant you'd risk your life for your buddies, because you knew they would do the same for you, and they'd never leave you dead or dying on any hill, for any reason." Such is the traditional devotion of soldiers, and like all sacrifice, it has a quality of undeniable beauty. Hackworth tenders no apologies for his ostensible sins as a trained killer. But whatever the reader's moral scruples about this soldier's appetite for violence, the voice in *About Face*, has real authority. When Hackworth writes of risking death or of the masculine cult of warriors, it comes, paradoxically enough, straight from the heart.

Hackworth and James Fallows, the author of *More Like Us: Making America Great Again*, would seem to be the most unlikely of comrades-in-arms. For one thing, Fallows's waist is not as wide as Hackworth's forearms. For another, Fallows earned some of his first stripes as a journalist for some brave articles about the class aspects of the Vietnam War, a war in which he and his fellow Harvard classmates dodged the draft by feigning anorexia, suicide, and other moral sensitivities while the less politically enlightened marched off to serve alongside Hackworth.

Still, Fallows and Hackworth, who share a deep skepticism about experts and privilege, end up in similar ideological foxholes. For example, both urge a return to the draft as the most democratic solution to the question of service and a necessary check on the military and the politicians who would use it. (Fallows thinks deferments should be eliminated as well.) Hackworth excoriates the army for a misplaced emphasis on academic ability, for its impractical "wonder gear," its bureaucratic values and oversupervised command

"Permission to write a poem, sir?"

structure. Fallows's broader indictment of American society reminds us that complex institutions like the army are reflections of the nation they serve.

Fallows, the author of *National Defense*, has been the *Atlantic*'s Asian correspondent for several years. Before signing on at the *Atlantic*, he crusaded at the *Washington Monthly*. His reasonableness, lucid prose, and moral commitment are reminiscent of George Orwell or Robert Coles. You trust his sense of fair play.

More Like Us uses the economic and cultural prowess of Japan to help illuminate the singular character and virtues of America. Mimicking the Japanese devotion to obedience and industry is not a realistic alternative for Americans, he writes. If the Japanese have a talent for order and group devotion, Americans have an equally characteristic gift for disorder and individualism. Left free to reinvent themselves and recreate their circumstances, Americans will prosper. "The frontier is still open," Fallows insists. Our naive willingness to "overestimate (the) chances for success" is as valuable a resource for Americans as oil is to the Saudi Arabians. That peculiar American faith in possibilities is threatened, however, by the dominance of an "aristocracy of intellectual merit." While the frontier remains open, too often our schools, professions, institutions of popular culture, and much of the marketplace are not as freedom-loving as they should be.

Fallows is at his most seditious and compelling attacking the once unassailable assumptions of the meritocracy. The con-

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ceits of formal schooling, aptitude testing, preprofessional channeling, and credentialism are deftly exposed. There is no significant correlation between intelligence as measured by IQ and success in most jobs. Such testing consigns too many people, usually poor and working-class people, to the dunce's corner.

Here we can learn something from the Japanese. Japan's notorious examination system is understood as a measure of effort and determination, not absolute capacity. In Japan, Fallows writes, intelligence is like health: Most people are thought to have enough. If we truly are interested in equal opportunity, we must start testing for specific, not general, skills. Such a system permits most people to succeed and to feel they have a stake in the larger community.

Like Tom Wolfe, Fallows is invigorated, not offended, by the vibrant vulgarity of middle-class aspirations. "American society is healthier and more successful when our culture suppresses the instinct to set ourselves apart from one another." He even comes to the defense of Southern California, where he grew up amid the crass but redemptive striving of those who take America's promise of a "second chance" to heart. He accepts America's historically low "threshold of culture" as the price of broad opportunity, and accedes to "the fundamental culture of American success." If the result is prosaic, so be it.

Our talent for disorder goes hand in hand with the "creative destruction" capitalism spawns. Fallows thinks Americans are more likely to get hurt by shying away from the body contact involved in our competitive system; the best protection is to enter the fray. Similarly, a deemphasis on formal schooling will establish a "tighter connection between effort and reward," allowing people to enter the contest at various points. Nurses, for example, should be encouraged to assume more of the tasks assigned to doctors. Such flexibility, although disruptive, will enlarge what Fallows calls "the radius of trust."

Fallows can wax almost lyrical on the intoxications of mobility. He sings hosannas to the virtue of people "not knowing their place." Salvation lies in being able to pick up and start over again. Without much complaint, he endorses the idea that individuals should change the idea of self to fit the market. Churches, "superstitious" religions, unions, and other curbs on the accommodating self only impede that necessary metamorphosis.

Words like success and health are used somewhat promiscuously in *More Like Us*. Fallows risks this to champion our political "fictions" about equality and the democratic bonds opportunity creates. He believes people can succeed; more important, he believes it is essential they do. His paean to the decency of middle-class ambitions takes little note of the fear of failure haunting those peaceful streets and well-tended lawns. The frontier metaphor is emboldening, but rugged individualism and unbridled entrepreneurship were only one part, and usually a small part, of how the West was actually won. Wide open spaces are also disorienting. Risk management, in the form of the U.S. Cavalry, is an old American tradition as well. Fallows recognizes that a desire to limit the economic and social risks inherent in American life is the source of the popularity of medicine and law as careers. Still, he doesn't offer much to help mediate capitalism's destructive side. But mobility and a plucky indifference to tradition are not always blessings. Of what real consequence is any "radius of trust" when the most American response to failure is to hightail it for the territory? Institutions, like the church or unions, may handicap people by teaching them to "know their place." But without a sense of place how are we to determine our obligation to others? Fallows is well aware of these contradictions. Clearly, he thinks there are greater dangers. He's right.

Like Fallows, Alistair Cooke is infatuated with America and its ongoing sense of possibilities. In *America Observed* he brings his singular voice—ingratiating, erudite, empathetic, but reserved—to bear on four decades (from the 1940s to the 1980s) of tumultuous change. For those who only know Cooke as the graven eminence who presides over "Masterpiece Theatre" on PBS, his writing will come as a delicious revelation. *America Observed,* in which Cooke, among other things, rhapsodizes about Ava Gardner, pities Mike Wallace, and lionizes the *Chicago Tribune,* is drawn mostly from his work as American correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* from 1942 to 1972. Few reporters have ever been so unfailingly eloquent while meeting a daily deadline.

On everything from the barbarisms of the "permissive society" to the manifold ironies of American history, Cooke—who became a United States citizen in 1941—is a loving but firm interlocutor. There are a few dead spots. But for the most part, you can dip into *America Observed* on almost any page and find yourself both enlightened on a familiar point of history and awed by the author's inexhaustible felicity of phrase.

Reading Cooke on Thurgood Marshall's appearance before the Supreme Court in 1953 to argue the unconstitutionality of school segegration has an obvious poignancy. His 1956 report from Montgomery, Alabama, on an obscure local minister who was leading his black followers in a bus boycott, has the interest of a historical artifact, if for no other reason than its curiously ambivalent tone. Little more than a decade later, Cooke is in Atlanta to describe the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s funeral. "Once before, the ninth of April was a memorial day throughout the South," Cooke wrote with his typical eye for historical detail. "One hundred and three years ago today Robert E. Lee tendered his sword to General Grant ...."

Such pregnant historical allusion is as easily within Cooke's grasp as the brandy snifter on the table beside him on the "Masterpiece Theatre" set. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of American history and politics, and colors in the background of his topical assignments with a sure hand. His annotations to political conventions—"a chess tournament disguised as a circus"—are as thick and pungent as the cigar smoke clouding the assembly halls. His deft sketches of various politicians, including Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, Joe McCarthy, and a 1960 version of Richard Nixon, are marked by a keen sense of detachment and perhaps an even deeper skepticism about whatever the conventional political wisdom might be.

Cooke is, I think, scrupulously fair, and at times this impartiality comes across as

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a kind of indifference. But it serves him well over the long course. He brilliantly dissects the mystery of Barry Goldwater, whose honesty he admired and whose charisma somehow was never transmuted into national popularity. "He [Goldwater] thinks of Jefferson, and his audience looks on Caesar." Cooke's tribute to Eleanor Roosevelt is a model of graciousness and domestic insight. Her sense of duty, he writes, "planed away the emotional fat on a feckless, generous man...and produced a great president."

Away from public affairs, he is by turns whimsical and withering. "He looked like Merlin posing as Whistler's Mother," Cooke writes with amused admiration of Frank Lloyd Wright. Marilyn Monroe was a "charming and shrewd, and pathetic woman of tragic integrity." These portraits are remarkable at putting public figures in new moral or aesthetic contexts. In the realm of more peripheral phenomena, Cooke chatters on brightly about the evolution of Neiman Marcus, that quintessentially Texan institution of higher consumption. The Miss America pageant receives a long ironic look. Masters and Johnson's lab-cloaked prurience arouses Cooke's wit and scorn.

America Observed, with its reporter's disciplined objectivity, presents a series of vivid snapshots of many of the pivotal events and issues of our time. Its economy of means is not the least of its merits. Cooke, like his fellow citizens Fallows and Hackworth, has an inspiring allegiance to the American enterprise. □

BOOKS

'There's a troublemaker'

UNSEASONABLE TRUTHS
Harry Ashmore
Little, Brown and Company, $27.50, 616 pp.

Dennis O'Brien

The first student demonstration I ever witnessed was at the University of Chicago in the spring of 1953. The demonstration was in classical form: placards, chanting students, a cordon of protesters through which faculty had to maneuver. The cause of all this commotion was, however, absolutely unique and—in the contemporary world—wholly incredible. Placards read: "Don't let them [the faculty] take our College from us!" Specifically the students were protesting against the introduction of free choice (electives) into the college curriculum.

Unseasonable Truths is a biography of Robert Maynard Hutchins, the man who created the college which the student demonstrators wished to protect from faculty libertarians. Son of the parsonage, dean of the Yale Law School at twenty-seven, president of the University of Chicago at twenty-nine, Hutchins was the most controversial and publicized educational leader of his day. The Hutchins College was a required four-year course which concentrated on Great Books (more or less). Hutchins sought to duplicate in an undergraduate curriculum some echo of the grand *Summa* he admired by St. Thomas. With his philosophical collaborator, Mortimer Adler, President Hutchins established such a metaphysical program for John D. Rockefeller's university on the Midway that it was said of Chicago that it was "a Baptist institution where Jews taught Catholicism to atheists."

Mr. Hutchins resigned as chancellor of the University of Chicago as of January 1951. By the time of the 1953 demonstration, the forces of academic partition and specialization against which he had battled were about to regain the curriculum. None too soon as far as his successor, President Lawrence A. Kimpton, was concerned. He was to say of the Hutchins College:

> [It was] a kind of queer and unusual place. Every queer and unusual student who disliked athletics and the normal outlets of young people was attracted to the Hutchins College....The Great Books course was a joke, and Hutchins knew it was. When I used to kid him about it, how superficial and shallow it was, he would say, "Well, it's better than getting drunk" and I think that's a pretty good summary of it. It certainly made no intellectual contribution.

Contrast Kimpton's acid comment with the ecstatic review of a Hutchins College alumnus, George Steiner: "To this distant day, I tingle at the recollection of OII—Observation, Information, and Integration—the crowning course in the college. Here an often inspired teaching staff introduced us to the attempt...to discover a general principle of human understanding, to find logic and meaning in both the world and the thought in which we incorporate the world" (*New Yorker*, October 23, 1989).

Was Hutchins's *summa curricula* a paragon of pedagogy or, as A.J. Liebling claimed in a famous phrase, "the greatest magnet for juvenile delinquents since the Second Crusade"? Either way it would be a fascinating story. (Most university presidents are low on the tingle, managing bureaucracies of scholarship which process youth to no ill-effect but which rarely produce, or even seek, "a general principle of human understanding.") Robert Maynard Hutchins, right or wrong, may have been the last university president for whom anyone cared whether he/she was either. An inherently important story—but not, alas, in Harry Ashmore's account.

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Unseasonable Truths—the title comes from Hutchins's claim that the sin of speaking truth "out of season" was his lifelong fault—breaks roughly in the middle between Hutchins's career at Chicago and all that came after. What came after is the stuff of Chekovian tragedy. The great man spent the rest of his life drumming up conferences on grand issues with the touching hope that a gaggle of intellectuals might clear up world politics. The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions was the last of these ventures. One senses the comic sadness of it all in Hutchins's name for the mansion in Santa Barbara where the center was located: El Parthenon.

Harry Ashmore became associated with Hutchins during this later "floundational" period (Ezra Pound's ingenious coinage). The last three hundred pages of the biography constitute the better half because Ashmore knows the intimate arguments and egos which marked the sad escapades and bold dreams of Hutchins's last ventures. It is precisely that detail of persons and issues that is lacking in the account of the Chicago years.

One of Hutchins's Chicago defenders contrasted Hutchins and Kimpton: "Hutchins was wont to put first things first but nothing second.... Kimpton put second things first, for lack of clear priorities of his own." In his account of Hutchins at Chicago, Ashmore gives us lots of second things without really assessing the force of the first things. Hutchins had an unhappy first marriage; he was in America First yet also accused of communism; he was continually rumored to be a crypto-Catholic but, in fact, was decidedly untheological. Hutchins himself steadfastly refused to write an autobiography and he may have been correct. Philosophy has no biography. The interesting Hutchins tried to live as a timeless contemporary of Aristotle; it was somewhat irrelevant that he also dealt with Harold Swift, his remarkably supportive Chairman of the Board. Hutchins's life was not as pale as Immanuel Kant's, but in the long run the value of philosophers is not in their friends and table manners.

I happened to run into the president of one of the major Ivy universities while I was reading through *Unseasonable Truths*. He spotted Hutchins's picture on the cover, tapped the volume and said emphatically, "There's a troublemaker!" Even today Hutchins's views evidently can cause a shudder to run down Ivy walls. A biography of Hutchins-the-troublemaker would require a searching look at the practice and theory (such as it is) of higher education in America and RMH's place as a troublesome, arrogant, Quixotic critic of the same. □

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ROSA'S STORY

THE SHAWL
Cynthia Ozick
Alfred A. Knopf, $12.95, 70 pp.

Irving Halperin

Cynthia Ozick's two masterpieces, "The Shawl," a story, and "Rosa," a novella, are the two parts of this volume. First appearing separately in the *New Yorker*, both works were included in the annual *Best American Short Stories*—"The Shawl" in 1981 and "Rosa" in 1984—and awarded first prize in the annual *O. Henry Prize Stories* collection. Published together, they now take on added power and resonance. Each piece is organically linked to the other; Rosa is the main character in both; the Holocaust echoes through the volume.

"The Shawl" focuses on a horrifying incident in a Nazi concentration camp where Rosa Lubin, Polish Jew, has hidden her fifteen-month-old baby, Magda, in a shawl. The baby continually suckles the linen shawl, uselessly seeking nourishment after the drying up of her mother's breasts. Rosa's fourteen-year-old niece, Stella, steals the shawl; subsequently, in the search for it, Magda is killed by a camp

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REVIEWERS

DENNIS O'BRIEN *is president of the University of Rochester. His most recent book is* God and the New Haven Railway *(Beacon),*

IRVING HALPERIN, *professor of English and creative writing at San Francisco State University, is the author of the pioneering study,* Messengers from the Dead: Literature of the Holocaust.

GEORGE E. IRANI, *an Arab-American Catholic scholar, is the author of* The Papacy and the Middle East *(Notre Dame) and is now completing another book on the history of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine.*

guard, who flings the baby against an electrified fence. The story builds in tension and emotional power to an unbearable pitch, as Rosa looks on helplessly while her baby burns.

"Rosa" opens three decades later in Miami, where Rosa, now a fifty-eight-year-old, resides in the "dark hole" of a single room at a hotel for elderly retirees. Having come to Florida from Brooklyn, where she destroyed with a hammer her antique-furniture store, she is being begrudgingly subsidized by her forty-nine-year-old niece, Stella, who appeared in "The Shawl."

It is a testimony to Ms. Ozick's artistry and depth of understanding that Rosa, though given to rage and moments of dementia, is sympathetically drawn.

"Thieves took it," Rosa says to a kind, concerned seventy-one-year-old gentleman, Mr. Persky, who would like to draw her away from obsessively living in the past; here she is referring to her pre-Holocaust life in Warsaw. What the Nazis "stole" was not only her parents and not only her language and culture but also her very desire for living in the present. The "thieves" changed her from a genteel, cultivated person to a madwoman and scavenger. The question that this story raises is whether sanity is possible for Rosa after the unspeakable abuse (for one, she was raped more than once by Germans) that she suffered during the Holocaust.

The portrait of this tormented woman is, by extension, a study of how the Nazis deformed their victims. Rosa is driven by fetishes and bizarre delusions. She believes that Magda was not murdered but rather survived, is married, and teaches in a university. The mother writes unmailed letters to her dead daughter in an excellent literary Polish. Even more disturbing for the reader, Rosa adheres to a kind of idolatry in making a relic of the shawl which once hid Magda; idolatry because, in the narrator's view, Rosa is worshiping dead matter.

In mythicizing her Warsaw past (what she calls the real life, when she was the daughter of "important" parents), she dismisses the elderly people in the streets of Miami as "old ghosts" without a "real life." Ms. Ozick's large talent for the unsettling image is in evidence when Rosa alludes to these retirees as "scarecrows, blown about under the murdering sunball with empty rib cages." In a stunning tour de force passage brilliantly combining precise, lapidary prose, immigrant English, and Henry Jamesean allusiveness, Rosa's search for a pair of missing underpants is rendered against a backdrop of a surrealist nighttime Miami:

> The streets are clogged with wanderers and watchers; everyone in search, bedouins with no fixed path. The foolish Florida rains spray down—so light, so brief and fickle, no one pays attention. Neon alphabets, designs, pictures, flashing undiminished light through the sudden small rain. A quick lick of lighting above one of the balconied hotels. Rosa walked. Much Yiddish. Caravans of slow old couples, linked at the elbows, winding down to the cool of the beaches. The sand never at rest, always churning, always inhabited; copulation under blankets at night, beneath neon-radiant low horizons.

In a time when the memory of the Holocaust is being trivialized by slick fiction, talk shows, and TV "documentaries," and when some social "scientists" (necrophiliacs, Rosa would call them) are doing "research projects," written in atrocious psychobabble, on the "survivor," Ms. Ozick's extraordinary volume is a particularly welcome achievement of the moral imagination. And yet, even such splendid literary art is not truly redemptive, for stories of the Holocaust cannot resurrect the dead, and many of those who survived are marked for life. Nothing can alter those tragic facts.

PEACE, JUSTICE, & SECURITY

JUSTICE AND ONLY JUSTICE
A Palestinian Theology of Liberation
Naim Stifan Ateek
Orbis Books, $18.95, 229 pp.

George E. Irani

This book is an original attempt by an Arab Christian clergyman to define a theology of liberation for the Palestinians living inside Israel and in the occupied Territories.

Naim Stifan Ateek is Canon of St. George's Anglican Cathedral in Jerusalem. He is at once a Christian, a Palestinian, an Arab, and an Israeli. This personal background gives a sense of the complexity of the task he sees facing Arab Christians in Israel-Palestine and in the Middle East .

Ateek focuses on Israel's Palestinian Christians and addresses his theology of liberation to them. Today, Israeli Arab Palestinians are divided into three main groups: Muslims comprise 70 percent of the total Arab population, about 600,000; Christians 13 percent, or 100,000; and Druze and others, 10 percent, or 75,000. Since 1948 and the beginning of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel's Palestinians have passed through three distinct stages: shock (1948-1955); resignation (1956-1967); and awakening (1968-1988).

Ateek assesses the role of the Christian churches in the state of Israel. Until the late 1980s the churches remained quiet, opting to stay out of politics.

The church was itself a victim of the Palestine tragedy, and most members of

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It however, equally important for Christian pilgrims to meet the living stones of the land—the Christians. To visit the holy sites is a very moving experience for many; meeting the "holy" people can be a very rewarding and enriching experience for both. Visiting museums can give a person an important sense and appreciation for the past; but to visit the churches of the land, to worship with the indigenous Christians, and to meet them personally can give the pilgrim both a sense of appreciation for the present and an invaluable experience and insight into the life of the living and pulsating Christian communities of the land, who with their ancestors before them have borne a continuing witness to Christ for the last two thousand years.

—Naim Stifan Ateek
Justice and Only Justice

the church's hierarchy in Israel were, and remain foreigners. For example, the leadership of the Greek Orthodox church is Greek; the Latin church had an Italian patriarch until December 1987, when, for the first time, a Palestinian was appointed as Latin patriarch of Jerusalem.

For Ateek, God is a God of justice and hope. "Although the adversary may be ungodly, deceitful, and unjust, he or she will not have the final word. God will inevitably vindicate what is right and just." Ateek bases his theology of liberation on an understanding of God which is universal and inclusive. Such a vision has always stood in tension with nationalists' conceptions of the deity. Ateek is strongly critical of both Christian Zionists and their Israeli friends, who, he believes, shamelessly interpret the Bible for propagandistic purposes.

The main theme of the book is that "Palestine is a country for both the Jews and the Palestinians," but that there can be no peace without *justice* for the Palestinians and *security* for the Israelis. Ateek pleads that Israelis and world Jewry in general hear the cry of the Palestinians. In light of the *intifadah* and the dramatic impact it has had on Israel's image and body politic, Ateek argues that it "is for the security and well-being of Israel that a Palestinian state should be established."

But Palestinians will have to honor and accept Israel as a Jewish state. Ateek calls on the Palestinians to acknowledge the significance of the Holocaust: "The new attitude would make us Palestinians face Israel quite candidly and state that the only justification that the Palestinians will accept for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine is the Holocaust." This is quite a courageous statement coming from a Christian, Palestinian, Arab, Israeli clergyman. So far, Christians in the Arab East have not tackled the thorny issue of anti-Semitism and Christian responsibilities during the Holocaust.

The new attitude the Israelis will have to adopt is to acknowledge that the Palestinians were wronged, their land usurped, and their human rights trampled. Ateek wants the Israelis to tell the Palestinians: "We are willing to negotiate with your representatives, the PLO, and we choose to live in peace with you." Regarding Jerusalem, Ateek believes that the Holy City must be shared on an equal basis among Christians, Muslims, and Jews, and could later become the capital of a federation he proposes which would include Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, and Palestine.

Canon Ateek concludes his book with a call to the leadership of the Christian churches in Israel-Palestine to unite their efforts and work for peace. The challenges they face are daunting: they must liberate themselves from centuries of division among themselves, from the Israelis, and from the historic yoke of distrust between Christians and Muslims. □

Points of Light

Readers of these pages familiar with the work of Emil Antonucci, *Commonweal*'s art director, have a treat in store: his pulsing, pointillist illustrations for Mary Fahy's just-released *The Tree that Survived the Winter* (Paulist, $6.95, 66 pp.). The book is an allegorical tale of faith and endurance. Antonucci works here as a Seurat in earthen tones, every dot bonded with energy and light. There is a sense of play and not a particle is inanimate or inconsequential.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 690)

from the beginning of that government in 1921 to the present time, to second-class status: discrimination in employment, searches, raids on homes, and internment without charge. After the repression of the Northern Ireland civil rights movement by the government and police in 1969, Irish nationalists fought back. Riots ensued, and Britain sent in troops to restore order.

Terence MacSwiney, whom Mr. Lynch refers to as an "important IRA leader of the 1920s," was Lord Mayor of Cork when he was arrested by the British government and charged with possessing seditious documents. He would not recognize the British courts, and refused food while in jail. He died after seventy-four days on hunger strike and was publicly mourned throughout Ireland....

The use of force in behalf of a just cause, and for freedom, is not evil. Rather it is in standing against inequality and injustice that mankind has finally won, in recent generations in parts of the world, a share in equality, liberty, and freedom.

JOHN BRANIGAN

Poles at Auschwitz

Providence, R.I.

To the Editors: In forty years of reading *Commonweal*, I have not, until your October 6 issue, had occasion to write a letter to the editor. But I found a statement in the excellent article, "Close Enough to Step on Toes," which needs correcting. I refer to Leon Klenicki's statement, "but there was not a national ideology leading to the destruction of the total Polish population."

I have personal knowledge that there was indeed such an ideology. On November 2, 1944, the B-17 on which I was navigator was shot down on a raid over Merseburg. A couple of weeks later, at an interrogation center near Frankfurt, I was one of those randomly chosen to endure a face-to-face, one-on-one performance by a representative of the Goebbels propaganda ministry. He was a sixty-four-year-old civil engineer who had spent eleven years in Salt Lake

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City and returned to participate in the thousand-year Reich. He spent an hour proclaiming the virtues of the extermination of the Jews, expressing confidence that the world would one day thank Hitler for his benefaction.

Then, he announced that once the Jews were done away with, the Poles would be the next to go because "they are obviously an inferior race." (I put that in quotation marks because even after all these years I can testify that that is exactly what he said.) He went on to other exterminations that would follow once the Poles were eliminated from the human gene pool.

Now if the Germans were telling this to American POWs, surely the Poles must have gotten wind of it. I think I can guess accurately that this is common knowledge today in Poland that they too were scheduled for Holocaust.

The conclusion I come to is that the Poles are entitled to a piece of Auschwitz, and that the Jews are overreaching in claiming exclusive rights to it. I don't think this makes me anti-Semitic because most of the motivation I had for deciding to be a priest came from reflection on the horror of what that man had said.

I am still horrified and will be to the end of my life. REV. EDWARD W. MULLEN

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Institutes

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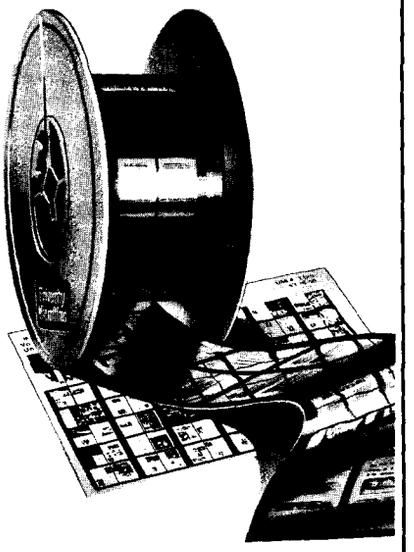

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